

PRINCIPALS, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND MORAL LEADERSHIP:
AN EXAMINATION OF HOW PRINCIPALS WORKING IN
POOR COMMUNITIES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR THEIR STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

PRINCIPALS, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, AND MORAL LEADERSHIP: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW PRINCIPALS WORKING IN POOR COMMUNITIES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR STUDENTS

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This qualitative study examined how 12 principals view their role as challengers of the propensity for social reproduction in the poor communities in which they work. The primary data sources were interviews with principals who work in rural, suburban, and urban schools that receive Title 1 funding. Review of school documents, community demographics and history, as well as observations were used to study the culture of the school and community that each principal works within. There are high costs to individuals and our society at large in providing substandard education and low levels of economic access. However, the social bifurcation of American society is at its highest level since the turn of the 20th century. Indeed, the Gini Coefficient, which is defined by PovertyNet as the most commonly used measure of fiscal inequality, is the highest it has ever been recorded in America. The Gini Coefficient identifies complete equality with the variable of 0 and complete inequality with the variable 1, currently places America's level of inequality at a .46 (U.S. Department of Labor, Census Bureau Income). This

qualitative study strived to determine how principals in poor communities see their role as challengers of the propensity of social reproduction in their communities.

The federal Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) summarizes the direct connection between education and success, “National policymakers and the public at large have increasingly recognized that the prosperity of the United States depends on the successful functioning of the American education system” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005, p. 21). Although the ECLS notes a clear connection between education and socio-economic success, the study goes on to report more than a million American students, whose families make less than \$85,000 a year, start out at the top of their class but “fall off the college track on the way to high school” (as cited in Carnevale, 2007). Social reproduction theorists argue this overrepresentation of low-income students demonstrating low levels of school success is in large part due to a lack of social, political, and educational capital, which results in low-income and minority students being denied complete access to educational resources (Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Wilson, 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Research has shown principals have an enormous impact on the effectiveness of schools, and ultimately, student outcomes (Grift & Houtveen, 1999; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006). The impact of the principal can be pervasive throughout a student’s education. This impact includes, but is not limited to, the classroom, the school, as well as the community. Barth (1990) reports principals comprehensively affect their students as well as the community they work within, both inside and outside the school building. As it is clear principals have a significant impact on school, and specifically, student success, it is reasonable to assume they could also

impact the likelihood for social reproduction among their students, especially those coming from poor communities.

The findings of this study suggest an increased likelihood for principals working in poor communities to engage in challenging social reproduction if they apply a more nuanced understanding and application of the multiple ethical paradigms as well as consistently prioritize the building of positive relationships with stakeholders. The pattern that resulted from the conclusions indicate that principals who engaged in sophisticated ethical problem solving as well as consistent positive relationship building were also more likely to pursue extensive formal education, specifically doctoral degrees in educational administration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

America was built on the ideology of opportunity for the individual. The belief that America was the land of possibility permeated the globe as families from across Europe and beyond traveled to the United States to access this land of opportunity. Lee (2003) notes popular culture has wholly accepted the notion of America as a country with porous class lines. Implicit in this belief is the assumption of laziness or fundamental incompetence of those who do not attain the economic marks of success, such as those living in poor communities. Gilens (1996) explains that implicitly accusing those less fortunate of deciding their fate allows for more fortunate citizens, and the dominant institutions, to strip themselves of any blame or responsibility.

Normore, Rodriguez, and Wynne (2007) report many educators sincerely wish for, and diligently work towards, the best for America's marginalized families. However, what educators and most others fail to realize is that the innate potential for success is latent within these families, and specifically, these students. Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin (2005) note educational policy as a dominant force in our society. The authors assert that the American education institution must be acknowledged as potentially oppressive and then critiqued for its limitations, constraints, as well as its exclusionary and disempowering practices especially against marginalized groups. Hooks (1994) states, "the colonizing forces are so powerful in this white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, it seems that black [marginalized] people are always having to renew a commitment to a decolonizing political process that should be fundamental to our lives and is not" (p. 47).

The barrier between educational success and poor students is in large part a product of the American educational system. Popkewitz (1998) explains that the American educational pedagogy attempts to extract greater participation and efficiency through the assumption of universal characteristics of childhood development and achievement. However, this attempt to homogenize the development and needs of students has inevitably excluded some. Farber & Holm (1989) argue those largely excluded from complete access and focus in U.S. educational policy and pedagogy are students in the lowest income quartile.

However, current educational policy and research have begun to recognize the need to close the achievement gap between America's rich and poor children. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation includes closing the achievement gap as one of its primary focuses. Darling-Hammond reports,

“The broad goal of NCLB is to raise the achievement levels of all students, especially underperforming groups, and to close the achievement gap that parallels race and class distinction. According to the legislation, too many of the neediest children are being left behind; too many are attending failing or unsafe schools; too many are receiving poor teaching and are performing well below potential; and too many are leaving school all together.”

(Meier, Kohn, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, & Wood, 2004, p.3)

The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices clearly reports on its website that the achievement gap is “a matter of race and class”

(www.subnet.nga.org/educlear/achievement/index.html, 10 November 2007). Moreover,

Thomas & Date (2006) note the drop out rate of American students is at an epidemic level, with national levels of student drop out rates being at 31 percent and as high as 50 percent in some poor, urban communities. These statistics highlight the enormity of the

size and scope of the problem surrounding the American education system, especially in regards to poor students and communities.

In considering the “epidemic level” at which the U.S. education system is failing students, especially poor and minority students, it is vital to recognize the role of the principal in contributing to the resolution of this issue. As Lunenburg & Irby (2006) explain, every educational reform report dating back to *A Nation at Risk* has highlighted the role of the principal as the primary variable in increasing a school’s likelihood for success. Furthermore, Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford (2006) qualify a principal as being the person in a school who has the most opportunity to exercise leadership. Therefore, it is reasonable to look towards principals and their ability to significantly contribute to the remedy for social reproduction throughout U.S. society.

Statement of the Problem

As noted by Rawlinson (2002), social bifurcation in America is at its highest level since the days of the robber barons. Prandy (1998) notes there is little doubt the consequences of social reproduction are underestimated. Aschaffenburg & Mass (1997) report that it has become increasingly clear to researchers there is a connection between culture, social class, and education. Bourdieu (1977) explains students enter their schooling with different levels of cultural knowledge and capital. Those students who come from more privileged backgrounds possess a greater endowment of the required social skills, which are utilized to decode explicit as well as implicit expectations. Mohr & DiMaggio (1995) state that knowing what is implicitly expected is a direct advantage

of students from privileged class backgrounds and that this advantage is “institutionalized as legitimate and valuable at the societal level” (p. 168).

Conversely, the cumulative disadvantage of students from marginalized families is well described in numerous research articles (Bourdieu, 1977; Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995; Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997). The National Center for Education Statistics notes on their website that the achievement gap in reading for fourth graders between students with social capital and those without (privileged white students v. poor-minority students) measured from 26-28 points of deviation, an alarmingly high discrepancy. The National Governors Association (2007) explains this significant discrepancy between the levels of academic success between poor and privileged children as the achievement gap. Their website explains,

“The achievement gap is a matter of race and class. Across the U.S., a gap in academic achievement persists between minority and disadvantaged students and their white counterparts. This is one of the most pressing education-policy issues that states currently face.”

The issue of educational disadvantage for marginalized students, which results in social reproduction for these children, has become such a pervasive issue within the American education policy arena that it has become the focus of arguably the most important contemporary federal policy and mandate, No Child Left Behind Act. The website for the US Department of Education (US DOE) notes in their explanation of NCLB’s goals that the legislation “ensures that all schools are held accountable for students success...regardless of income level” and that “closing the achievement gap is now a national priority.”

Purpose of the Study

As discussed earlier, it is clear there is a historically significant level of social bifurcation in America and this deepening of American class lines has a relationship with the American public education institution. Within the past decade, educational leaders and policy makers have not only recognized the degree to which education contributes to social reproduction, but they have also begun to act to counter this phenomenon.

The US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, states on the U.S. DOE website, "For the first time ever, we are looking ourselves in the mirror and holding ourselves accountable for educating every child. That means all children, no matter their race or income level or zip code." The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which principals working in poor communities view their role as challengers to the propensity of social reproduction in their community. The researcher attempted to also determine which variables contribute to and work against principals in poor communities holding themselves accountable for challenging the propensity of social reproduction in their communities.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study highlight the proclivity for social reproduction in poor communities as well as the possible impact principals can have on this process. The areas of impact for principals are defined as well as their potential as change agents within these dimensions. Ultimately, the research questions asked how principals in poor communities view their role as challengers of the propensity for social reproduction in their communities.

The Research Questions follow:

1. How do principals define success for their students?
2. How do principals construct their role as facilitating social mobility and/or challenging social reproduction?

What variables, including but not limited to demographic information, education background, and personal ethics, impact how principals view their role in relation to social reproduction.

3. How does the degree of personal and professional alignment with moral leadership affect the principals perception of their role in challenging social reproduction?

Definitions

The following terms and definitions will be used in this study:

1. Moral Leadership- A framework to understanding leadership that highlights the moral component of engaging in leadership activities and promotes the importance of leaders deliberating and consciously engaging in decision-making with the moral component in mind.

2. Poor communities - Communities that fall under the definition of poor community in this study are inhabited by a majority of families who fell under the poverty level set forth by the U.S. Census. For example, in 2006 the U.S. Census set the poverty level for a family of four at a yearly combined income of \$20,444. The poverty threshold is reached through a complex formula that takes into account a family's income, size, age of

members, and number of dependents.

(<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html>, 10 November 2007)

3. Rural schools - Schools who have a mailing address located within a rural area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. A rural territory is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as all areas located outside urban areas and urbanized clusters. This generally means a core population under 2,500 and/or a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile.

http://www.ruraledu.org/site/c.beJMIZOCiRH/b.1129819/apps/nl/content3.asp?content_id={2403BE78-E6C4-461D-BE33-0EBFE232A80D}¬oc=1, 10 November 2007)

4. Social Reproduction: The generational replication of social class within families and communities.

5. Suburban schools - Schools who have a mailing address located in a suburban town (organized cluster) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. A town (urbanized cluster) is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as an area with a core population of 2,500 - 49,999 and a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile in its core. In addition, adjoining territory with a population density of at least 500 persons per square mile is considered part of the urbanized cluster.

http://www.ruraledu.org/site/c.beJMIZOCiRH/b.1129819/apps/nl/content3.asp?content_id={2403BE78-E6C4-461D-BE33-0EBFE232A80D}¬oc=1, 10 November 2007)

6. Title 1 funding- Schools qualify for Title 1 funding based on the percentage of their student enrollment that qualifies as being low-income. The proportion of low income families in schools is most frequently determined through the percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch. If a school has over 40 percent of students who qualify as low-income the school is considered a Title 1 school.

([Http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/compliance/title1.html](http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/compliance/title1.html), 10 November 2007)

7. Urban schools - Schools who have a mailing address located within a city (urbanized area) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census Bureau defines an urban area as an area with a core population of at least 50,000 and a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile in its core. In addition, adjoining territory with a population density of at least 500 persons per square mile is considered part of the urbanized area.

(http://www.ruraledu.org/site/c.beJMIZOCrH/b.1129819/apps/nl/content3.asp?content_id={2403BE78-E6C4-461D-BE33-0EBFE232A80D}¬oc=1 , 10 November 2007)

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in several aspects. It was conducted in only 12 elementary schools, within eight different school districts. The school districts chosen to participate were evenly divided between rural, suburban, and urban communities. All elementary schools received Title 1 funding.

The opinions and experiences expressed by the principals involved in this study may not be aligned with other principals. The data derived from the results of this study are only representative of the principals who directly participated in the study. The

findings of this study are not to be generalized to apply to all principals. Moreover, generalizability is not a focus or function of this study.

Interviews were limited to only elementary school principals. Therefore, future study and consideration of middle, high school, and district level administrators may be warranted to validate the findings of this study in relation to all age levels and/or school districts. Moreover, the viewpoints of other stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents were not included in this study.

Ultimately, this study stands alone as a valid and complete assessment of this particular population at this particular time (Caldwell, 2007). The researcher is cognizant of the limited scope of variables initially considered and acknowledges some additional variables may have affected the findings of this study. The product of this study offers a description and gauge of importance of the variables that impact the degree to which a principal sees them self as a challenger to the propensity for social reproduction within the poor community that they work.

Significance of this Study

Research highlights the importance of the principal on student achievement (Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Outson, & Smith, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger (2003) explain, “From certain early research into school effectiveness and a review of school leadership studies, the effective principal comes to the fore as an instructional leader who affects school climate and student achievement” (p.398).

With the divide between America's rich and poor increasing to historical highs (Davis, 1999) and the increased awareness of the role America's public education system plays in producing class immobility, or social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; Farber & Holm, 1989; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Giroux, 1991), it is vital to the democratic foundation of American society to actively pursue solutions to the shortcomings of American public schools. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Education, and the vast majority of bi-partisan leaders, recently created and enacted legislation known as the No Child Left Behind Act, which focused on closing the achievement gap.

The political attention focused on the lack of upward social mobility achieved by low-income students, or social reproduction, is due in large part because of the impending societal harm this trend will produce. Although the immediate consequences of social reproduction are significant and bear attention, the long-term impact of this bifurcation will be immense. "Unless the United States breaks this trend, the American middle class will be a thing of the past actually within the lifetime of most Americans living today" (www.sustainablemiddleclass.com).

It is obviously important for the field of education to develop an understanding of what is contributing to the increased bifurcation of American society. Moreover, educational leaders and politicians must determine how schools contribute to, and arguably more importantly, can work against social reproduction. In considering the literature discussed previously that clearly links principals with school effectiveness and student achievement, it is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of how principals working in poor communities view their role in challenging social reproduction. It is also necessary to determine what variables impact the degree to which

principals working in poor communities are or are not willing to challenge the propensity for social reproduction in their communities.

Theoretical Base

For the purposes of this study the theoretical frameworks of social reproduction, moral leadership, and the multiple ethical paradigms will be utilized. Social reproduction theory aided in developing a comprehensive understanding of the over-representation of social class replication among low-income families and their children, and how this pattern is related to the U.S. education institution. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of moral leadership assisted in linking the role of a school principal with that of an agent of social change. Ultimately, the multiple ethical paradigms were utilized to assist in generating an understanding of the moral and ethical beliefs and perspectives of the principals who participate in this study.

This study was conducted using the theoretical lense of social reproduction. Specifically, the relationship between the U.S. education system and social reproduction were explored. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) note the level of social capital, or proficiency in implicit societal expectations and norms, that a student possesses when entering schooling strongly correlates with the degree of academic success that the student will most likely achieve. Bowles & Gintis (2002) refer to social reproduction as “intergenerational persistence of economic status”. Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) explain the impact of the insidious institutional disempowerment enacted by American public education against poor and minority students:

“However, in an age when factories stand empty amid the rubble of cities, and credentials remain an important rite of passage to entry level technical and

managerial jobs as well as being an absolute precondition of professional occupation, a student's failure to meet approved academic standards is tantamount to a sentence from a court of law. The accused is condemned to what some political economists term the secondary labor market: industries in highly competitive markets, with low technological development, and offering nonunion wages and working conditions." (p.9)

The theoretical framework of moral leadership provided an important perspective to consider when examining the disempowering effect the U.S. public education system has on marginalized students. Educational leaders, or principals, who ascribe to engage in their profession as a moral imperative prioritize the values of moral leadership theory. Those principals who embody the personal attributes associated with moral leadership are arguably more likely to see their role as challengers to social reproduction for poor students. The trend of research highlights the principal's potential to increase a student's possibility for academic success. With this in mind, the framework of moral leadership moves the principal's potential to improve student success, especially for marginalized students, from a possibility to a moral imperative (Greenfield, 2004; Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1998).

The concept of education as a moral practice dates back to Dewey (Dewey, 1922). Sergiovanni (1996) suggests schools are moral communities that require a moral authority, or moral leadership. "Greenfield extends this line of thinking to conclude that leadership is a moral art and the leaders conduct must be deliberately moral" (Greenfield as cited in Parkes & Thomas, 2007). Begley & Stefkovich (2004) note the benefit of moral leadership is actualized when educational leaders sincerely take into consideration the value orientations of others, the culture and politics of the American education system, as well as the school they serve in.

When acknowledging the profession of educational administration as a moral craft, one must begin to examine the paradigms of moral or ethical decision making that are utilized by educational leaders. Shapiro & Stefkovich (2005), argue there are four paradigms of ethical decision making. These paradigms are the ethic of the profession, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care, and the ethic of justice. Additionally, the ethic of community has risen to play a role in the multiple ethical paradigms. These ethical paradigms can be utilized in either a complementary, synergistic manner or in juxtaposition of one another in the decision making processes, specifically in this case for educational administrators.

The ethic of the profession sets forth a broad assertion that educational leadership must contain within its self definition a degree of ethical consideration. The value of ethics within the profession of educational leadership was solidified in 1996 (Shapiro & Gross, 2004). In 1996 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed the *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC), Standards for School Leaders*. The ISSLC Standards are a list of competencies that must be mastered before a school administrator can perform within the best practices of the profession. The 5th Standard reads: “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner (ISSLC, 1996, p. 18).

Furthermore, CCSSO broadened the 5th ISSLC Standard in March of 2008 to include all “educational leaders” not just the school administrators identified in the 1996 document (CCSSO, 2008, p. 4). With the trend in educational leadership moving toward widening the breath and importance of ethics within the profession, it is clear that educational leaders must consider how ethics impact their professional judgment and

effectiveness. Shapiro & Stefkovich (2005) explain the ethics of the profession demands, “its leaders to formulate and examine their own professional code of ethics in light of an individuals personal code of ethics, as well as standards set forth by the profession” (p. 26). They further argue that consideration of the best interest of the student must be at the center in all ethical decision making by educational leaders.

The need to consider the best interest of individual students can easily be aligned with the ethic of care. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) note the ethical paradigm of care is born from feminist scholars and is concerned with the well being of the individual being cared for. Gillian (1982) describes relationship building and concern for another as a fundamental element of the ethic of care. Noddings (2002) expands on the ethic of care by grounding relational, caring intention or “motivational displacement” as a criteria. Relational caring can translate into the educational setting through the use of Roland Martin’s (1993) three C’s: caring, concern, and connection. Furthermore, Bell Hooks (1994) integrates the ethic of care and educational leadership by encouraging educators to, “Teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students” (p. 13).

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) explain the ethic of critique is born from critical theory and links the classroom and politics. The authors explain that critical theory focuses its analysis on the juxtaposition of power among social classes. “Critical theorists are often concerned with making known the voices of those who are silenced, particularly students” (Giroux, 1998, 2003; Weis & Fine, 1993 as cited in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005, p.15). Therefore, the ethical paradigm of critique can easily be associated with both the movements for social justice and civil rights.

The ethic of justice is described by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) as focusing on rights and laws. Furthermore, the authors delineate between the two schools of thought within this ethical perspective. The first school of thought within the ethic of justice paradigm highlights Utilitarianism and Kantianism (Deontology). Strike, Haller, & Soltis (2005) describe this ethical philosophy as one that encourages “people to act as to maximize the average happiness or average utility” (p. 159). Simply stated, this perspective is more concerned with the degree to which actions are perceived as right or wrong, as deemed by larger societal mores and laws, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions.

Conversely, the other school of thought within the ethic of justice consists of Act Utilitarian and Act Deontologists philosophies. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) explain those who ascribe to this type of ethical belief system see great value in rules but realize that rules can justifiably be broken depending on the consequences of the act. Overall, this ethical approach “sees society, rather than the individual, as central and seeks to teach individuals how to behave in their life within communities. In this tradition, justice emerges from communal understandings” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005, p. 11).

Finally, the ethic of community, which is not part of the Multiple Ethical Paradigms but rather will be utilized as a complimentary ethical framework, is focused on community values and needs as a priority in decision making. Furman defines the ethic of community as “the moral responsibility to engage in communal processes as educators pursue the moral purposes of their work” (Furman, 2004, p. 215). In a sense, the ethic of community mirrors the ethic of care in that it is focused on how others are affected by

one's decision making. The difference is found in the prioritization of the individual in the ethic of care versus the prioritization of the communal in the ethic of community.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, the literature of social reproduction and principal effectiveness will be reviewed, specifically focused on the political, social, cultural, and economic factors of social reproduction. Once established, a working understanding of social reproduction will be applied to the American education system, and specifically to how marginalized students are affected.

The literature review will then explore the research on the principal's role in school effectiveness and student success. The principal's role will be broadly defined as an instructional leader, steward of school culture and climate, and facilitator of community relations. In examining these three facets of the principal's job and potential impact, the literature will examine how reasonable it is to consider the possibility of principals impacting social reproduction.

Finally, the integration of both the importance of educational leadership as well as an applied understanding of moral leadership in education as it relates to social reproduction will be explored. In the examination of moral educational leadership, the relationship between ethics, moral leadership, and an educational leaders goal of working towards providing students with opportunity will be highlighted.

Social Reproduction and American Schools

Devine (2004) notes, “Any theory of class reproduction must acknowledge that social capital, cultural and economic resources are mutually constitutive of each other” (p.182). Furthermore, institutional oppression must be taken into consideration. Children enter the US education system with different levels of capital (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997). This capital, or ability to understand the implicit expectations, rules, and language of the dominant societal institutions, such as education, correlates with the likelihood of the student’s school and social success (Coleman, 1988; Coleman, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

Bourdieu explains the disadvantage marginalized families have in the quest to enrich their children’s upward social mobility by highlighting, “Every established order tends to produce the naturalization of its arbitrariness” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.164). Giroux argues that classrooms are political as well as educational venues (Giroux, 1991, p. 48). Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) explain the dominant culture, or privileged class, utilize institutional control through such venues as education. This in turn, maintains the status quo between the social classes, in effect, ensuring that low income students suffer from social reproduction.

Lareau and Horvat (1999) suggest the variables that impact social reproduction be viewed as fluid or organismic rather than fixed or mechanistic. The authors explain that although the existence of political, social, cultural, and economic capital must be considered, one must also consider that, in part, social reproduction is determined by how a person activates their potential capital regardless of how much or how little they have.

The authors highlight the individual's influence over social reproduction in the following analogy:

“In a card game (the field of interaction), the players (individuals) are all dealt cards (capital). However, each card and each hand has different values. Moreover, the value of each hand shifts according to the explicit rules of the game (the field of interaction) that is being played (as well as the way the game is being enacted). In other words, a good hand for blackjack may be a less valuable hand for gin rummy. In addition to having a different set of cards (capital), each player relies on a different set of skills (habitus) to play the cards (activate capital).

(Lareau & Horvat, 1999, p. 39)

This comprehensive view of social reproduction demands a more inclusive understanding of the factors that propagate social bifurcation. It is important to note that this expansion of social reproduction theory, which includes an acknowledgement of an individual's operative impact, in no way denies the institutional variables that impact the sustainment of social reproduction.

Research that integrates institutionally propagated limitations on upward social mobility (Bourdieu, 1977; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; ; Giroux, 1991; Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997) and the subjective consideration of the reflexivity and complexity of the individual impact on social reproduction (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1997; Lessard, 2007) generates a holistic, evolving understanding of social reproduction. This inclusive view of social reproduction is especially important when examining how American schools explicitly and implicitly contribute to the perseverance of social reproduction in U.S. society.

Although some research has attempted to associate education policy, especially on the state level, with the primary responsibility of the perpetuation of social reproduction (Young & Connolly, 1981; Saggar, 1991; Troyna, 1994), the myopic and over-encompassing nature of this perspective has been convincingly argued (Halsey,

Heath, & Ridge, 1980; Heath & Clifford, 1990; Blossfield & Shavit, 1993). Paterson & Iannelli (2007) submit that educational policy has contributed very little to mediate the impact that social inequities have on a child's educational experiences and opportunities. Instead, the education institution tends to facilitate the replication of the status quo.

It is important to look beyond examining educational policy in isolation in an attempt to identify how U.S. public schools contribute to and sustain social reproduction. In addition to policy, one must also examine the reciprocal relationship among capital allotments contained within schools, which mirror larger class patterns in American society. Furthermore, this examination must also include the discrete and diacritic impact of how an individual interacts with political, economic, social, and cultural capital (Roscigno, 1998).

Institutional oppression and an individual's socio-economic status are closely associated. This is to say, a student who comes from a low-income family is much more likely to be the victim of institutional oppression from the American public education system as compared to a student from a middle or upper class family (Alexander, Entwisle, & Thompson, 1987; Mehan, 1992; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994). The reasons for this include, but are not limited to, the institutional prioritization of dominant cultural values and norms as well as resource allocation.

In the US, there is a history of overrepresentation of minorities in lower socio-economic groups, which continues to persist today (Tienda & Jensen, 1998; US Bureau of Census 2000). As Dennison (2006) reports, due to housing patterns, more than a third of the country's black and Latino youth are attending segregated schools, which contain more than 90% minorities. In fact, within recent years there has been a growing trend of

“apartheid schools”, which contain 99% minority students. Orefield & Yun (1999) explain segregation is not isolated to ethnicity and race only; instead, socio-economic status must also be viewed as a primary variable.

The results of de jure segregation in US public schools plays heavily into propagating institutional oppression and social reproduction. The de jure segregation of low-income students results in significant discrepancies in funding and resources between poor and non-poor schools (Roscigno, 1996; Sutton, 1991). Ultimately, Bankston & Caldas (1996) explain that the effects of de jure segregation result in a lowering of achievement for all students enrolled in the marginalized schools.

The disparity of resources in low-income communities, and the impeding negative effects this has on a student’s academic outcomes, were so stark they resulted in the creation of federal Title 1 funding in 1965. The federal government created Title 1 funding to assist in supplementing resources in poor schools. More recently, in 2001, the US Department of Education enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Supporters of this legislation claim one of the major focuses of NCLB is closing the achievement gap between low-income minority students and middle to upper class students.

However, as previously explained, research shows educational policy alone can not prevent American schools from playing an ongoing role in perpetuating social reproduction for their low-income students. Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson (2006) explain the foundation for academic success begins with the family before students even enter school. Moreover, Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson (2007) note,

“Children’s earliest school experiences matter a great deal for long-term educational attainment. In fact, the literature has suggested that children are launched into achievement trajectories when they start formal schooling or even

before and that the pattern of these trajectories are highly stable over childhood and adolescence.” (p. 115)

“Family structural differences are likewise important, having implication for the availability of resources, parental time and supervision, and socialization” (Downey 1995; Menaghan, 1996; Powell & Steelman, 1990; Sandfar, McClanahan, & Wotjtkiewicz, 1992 as cited in Roscigno, 1998).

The family structural differences that are prevalent between families associated with the dominant culture, such as white rich families, and those of marginalized families, such as poor minority families, are considerable. A low income family’s structural or capital deficiency significantly impedes their children’s ability to succeed in school due to the high degree of dominant societal value assimilation school activities, traditions, rite, and rituals demand from students and their families (Wren 1999).

Communication styles within the family as well as within the family-school relationship serve as an excellent operationalized example of social capital deficiency, and how it relates to the success, or lack thereof, of marginalized students. To understand the significance of student achievement rates and parent communication styles, Bloom (1980) highlights the primary and consistent nature a parent’s communication style has on a child. Slaughter & Epps (1987) explains that before nursery school begins, a child’s family shapes the child through verbal and conversational styles and skills.

The communication styles vary greatly between middle class white parents, particularly mothers, and that of their lower-income counterparts (Scott-Jones, 1987). Feshbach (1973) notes that some of the most prevalent differences exist in how parents punish and/or teach their children. Specifically, Feshbach’s research revealed that white,

middle class mothers used far fewer critical or punishing statements. However, it should be noted that the determination of a statement as being defined as “critical” or “punishing” may be in and of itself a further perpetuation of dominant language and social capital.

Although the definitions of the terms “punishing” and “critical”, as used in Feshbach’s research, are man-made constructs; and therefore, subject to the very institutional prejudice which is prominent in post modern critiques, the dichotomy between accepted communication styles and marginalized or stigmatized communication styles is an important subject to explore in the effort to establish how schools play a role in social reproduction.

Villegas (2005) reports that, “Recently, the school failure of minority students has been explained in terms of incompatibilities in the ways that language is used at home and school” (pp. 42). Putnam (1993) urges educational policy makers to move beyond debates focused only on curriculum and governance to consider the impact that communication and social capital have on the likelihood of success for students, and in effect the progressive American public education agenda.

“The research shows in detail how teachers and minority students often misinterpret each other due to different assumptions about the appropriate ways of using language in the classroom” (Villegas, 2005, pp. 42). Wilson and Allen (1987) note that in the struggle to determine what will be acceptable in the classroom and what will not, the allocation of resources is usually a determining factor. As discussed earlier, for students who come from poorly educated, low-income families, the communication style they are punished for using in schools is usually taught to them by their parents. Consequently,

these students do not have the resources or advocates to defend them when teachers and the larger education institution demand they abandon their communication style to assimilate into dominant cultural norms. Petroni (1970) reports when students are faced with this dilemma they are essentially forced to choose between academic success and maintaining their minority identity and cultural frame of reference.

Yeakey and Bennett (1990) explain that when dealing with families that have limited social capital, say specifically in their understanding and use of dominant communication styles, schools find themselves in “a deceptive paradox”. This is to say, they are charged with the responsibility of creating opportunity and growth within individuals and society; however, the overarching and daily functions of schools are deeply rooted in the prejudices of dominant culture.

Therefore, if a low income family or student does not value or ascribe to the priorities, socialization, communication style, and definition of success as the dominant societal forces, they will be deemed outsiders at best, and failures at worst, by measures of the institutions that perpetuate dominant values. Moreover, even if low-income, marginalized families or students shared or aspired to the same values and priorities as the dominant class, it is likely their lack of capital, or their lack of knowing how to activate the little capital they have, would ensure they would have great difficulties gaining complete access to resources of the dominant class and institutions, specifically in this case, the American public education system.

In examining which independent characteristics impact a student’s likelihood for social mobility or reproduction most, Parker & Shapiro (Parker & Shapiro, 1993 as cited in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) note that social class, and particularly institutional

domination, perpetuate social reproduction. However, Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau (2003) note “the fact remains that the school has an independent and critical role in deciding crucial aspects of children’s educational advancement.” (p. 323) Therefore, the role of educational leaders as challengers or perpetuators of social reproduction must be examined.

The Importance and Role of the Principal

A review of educational research and reports quickly uncovers the difficulty in determining the exact nature of a principal’s impact on a school. Lunenburg & Irby (2006) note every educational reform report, dating back to the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, has determined the effectiveness of a principal as the primary variable in a school’s likelihood for success. Ultimately, a principal is the one person in a school who has the most opportunity to exercise leadership (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford 2006, p. 371). However, studies have challenged this assertion of a clear and direct link between the principal and the degree to which a school is effective and successful (Hallinger & Heck 1996; Hallinger & Heck 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi 2000).

For example, in their meta-analysis of the link between the principal’s role as an educational leader and school success set forth by studies conducted between 1980 and 1995, Hallinger and Heck (1996) found in Dutch schools there was no positive relationship between student success and educational leadership. However, it has been determined the findings of Hallinger and Heck’s 1996 report were deeply impacted by the study’s operational definition of an educational leader and the methodologies utilized. Specifically, Hallinger and Heck’s 1996 study based the definition of an educational

leader predominantly on the influence a principal has on teachers. However, with this definition, the study's authors were reliant on reciprocity, or a direct connection, between the reported views and opinions of teachers with those of the principals (Grift & Houtveen, 1999, p. 374).

In a study following the 1996 Dutch findings, Hallinger and Heck (1998) report principals contribute to a school's effectiveness; however, the authors limit the degree of impact to an indirect, casual relationship. The difference between Hallinger and Heck's 1996 study and the 1998 findings was the acknowledgement that researchers need to consider more than a direct relationship between educational leadership and school effectiveness. This sentiment has since been loudly echoed among other educational researchers. Leithwood & Jantzi (2000) note that mediating and/or moderation variables, which may affect student outcomes, need to be included in research designs in order for findings to be correct and robust.

Indeed, a meta-analysis of the educational research examining the direct and indirect impact between educational leaders and student success in American schools, conducted by Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005), found "principals can have a profound effect on the achievement of students in their schools" (p. 38). In considering mediating and moderating variables, Wimpleberg, Teddlie, & Stringfield (1989) explain researchers must focus on both the personal and professional characteristics of a principal as well as specific action taken by the principal. In an effort to establish effective research on principal actions, it is necessary to determine the expectations and roles principals must fulfill in the 21st century American school.

As found in the difficulty of establishing the exact impact of a principal on a school, education research presents a murky definition of the job description and parameters of a school principal. Throughout the research, the terminology widely applied to the working definition of a principal centers around the principal being an “educational leader” (Leithwood 1994; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom 2004; Lunenburg & Irby 2006; Lunenburg & Ornstein 2008). Although the primary role and duties of an educational leader is of great debate within the field of education, as reported by Cotton (2003), there are consistent characteristics of beliefs and actions of effective educational leaders that are pervasively identified throughout the research. For the purpose of this research, the role of a principal as an educational leader can be broadly divided into three categories: instructional leader, steward of school culture and climate, and facilitator of community relations.

Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) report the most pervasive themes throughout the literature regarding school administrators is the idea of the instructional leader. Cotton (2003) argues that educational leadership is not a finite job description. Rather, the term “educational leader” encompasses many tasks as well as characteristics. Some of the characteristics listed by Cotton include focus and involvement with curriculum development and delivery, communication, and vision. Lunenburg & Irby (2006) note,

“Effective school research has indicated that the principal, as the instructional leader, is critical to keeping a school focused on instruction, to setting a constructive climate and high expectation in standards and goals towards improved student achievement, to working to ensure a common curriculum, and towards providing leadership for teaching.” (p. 71)

As educational leaders, principals have a direct impact on teachers and how they deliver instruction. Edmonds (1982) argues that how teachers interact with students during curriculum delivery has a direct link to student success. With this in mind, it is easy to see that principals as instructional leaders potentially have an enormous impact on the success of their students.

Haynes, Emmons, and Ben-Avie (1997) report an analysis of school climate research has put forth the common conclusion that the atmosphere in which students learn directly influences the likelihood of successful student learning. Arnold, Perry, Watson, Minatra, & Schwartz (2006) state in their research effective principals clearly impact the school culture. Lunenburg & Irby (2006) report an important part of a principal's job is to establish and sustain a positive school climate. The authors go on to list some processes through which a principal can impact a school climate, namely creating a clear school vision and mission statement. Kruger, Witziers, & Slegers (2007) state the principal's vision for the school as a community of learners has proven to have a substantial impact on a principal's leadership style and effectiveness. Furthermore, McEwan (2003) notes highly effective principals focus on a high set of standards and expectations for the school community in which they lead, which permeates the climate and culture of the school building.

Effective principals also impact the community in which the school exists. Goldring (1990) suggests an important role of a principal's job is to be a "boundary spanner". This is to say, a successful principal will not only focus on what is happening inside the school building but also on the community outside the school building. DiPaola & Walther-Thomas (2003) note principals must be consummate relationship builders.

Relationship building should not be narrowly interpreted as relevant to only the principal and another person or persons. Rather, an effective principal must act as a conduit to establish relationships between the school, its students, and the community. Epstein (1995) argues the school, family, and community is so important that it is recognized throughout different levels of educational policies and mandates. The author states:

“The field has been strengthened by supporting federal, state, and local policies. For example, the Goals 2000 legislation sets partnerships as a voluntary national goal for all schools; Title I specifies and mandates programs and practices of partnership in order for schools to qualify for or maintain funding. Many states and districts have developed or are preparing policies to guide schools in creating more systematic connections with families and communities. These policies reflect research results and the prior successes of leading educators who have shown that these goals are attainable.”

A successful principal will be conscious of developing, sustaining, and strengthening the connection between school, home, and community, which is clearly prioritized and highlighted by federal and state legislation, mandates, as well as educational research.

With a review of the research, it is clear the field of educational leadership has determined the position of a principal as having a high level of impact and importance on student success. Although it has been debated as to what type of impact a principal has, direct or indirect, it is clear an impact exists. For the purpose of this research, the impact of a principal has been categorized into three areas: instructional leadership, steward of school climate and culture, and community relations. Hallinger & Murphy (1986) correlate effective schools with effective instruction that is chosen, aligned, and supervised by the instructional leader, the school principal. Lezotte (1992) notes effective schools have safe, nurturing climates and principals should be the ones communicating and ensuring the vision and realization of a positive school environment. Finally, Marzano, Walters, & McNulty (2005) note the importance of principals realizing a school

is not an isolated microcosm. Rather, it is part of a complex social network, or community, and principals must positively acknowledge this in both perception and action.

Literature Integration

After collecting and analyzing the data from this study, it was determined that further integration of the literature was necessary. This is to say, rather than discuss only the empirical or theoretical understanding of social reproduction and the role of principals in American schools, it is essential to explore an illustrative, grounded integration of the role of American educational leaders, social reproduction and moral leadership.

For an educational leader to practice moral leadership, they must demonstrate an evolved understanding of power. Specifically, in the position of a principal, the application of power must move from a power-holding relationship based on transactional situations of control to an integrated, reciprocal relationship based on understanding and mutual goals. In discussing moral leadership, Burns (1978) explains, “By this term I mean, first, that leaders and the led have a relationship not only of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values” (pp. 4). It is therefore necessary for an educational leader to recognize their power position, facilitate the sharing of this power with the shareholders, and actively work towards establishing an understanding of the needs, aspirations, and values of those being affected by decisions.

Moreover, educational leaders who wish to effectively engage in moral leadership must recognize not only the needs of the community but the societal mandates and constraints the community exists within. Greenfield notes,

“Reality in school organizations, as elsewhere, is socially constructed through symbolic interaction among the parties to the social situation. The constructed reality is not only a product of the immediate social interaction of the participants, but includes as well the lived experiences of the participants, which they bring to the social interaction; experience and meaning turn over upon themselves in the moment. Now, much of what transpires occurs out of habit- responses learned, internalized, and enacted often without conscious consideration- people have been socialized to certain expectations and social conventions. Schools are nested within containing community and societal cultures.”

(Greenfield, 2004, pp. 182)

In poor communities, the understanding of societal constructs and constraints would be largely based on critical theory and social reproduction.

To move this from a theoretical understanding to a practical application, Sergiovanni (1990) suggests nine dimensions for moral leadership. These dimensions are: 1) an emphasis on leadership rather than only effective management; 2) encouraging intrinsic investment; 3) moving beyond situation leadership to responsive leadership; 4) articulating the vision of the school with the authentic needs, interests, values, and beliefs of the shareholders; 5) establishing a supportive community; 6) promoting personal responsibility and purpose; 7) building on personal strengths and motivation; 8) facilitating collegiality; and 9) leadership that reflects a deep level of caring and commitment to the schools community needs and values. With these nine dimensions of leadership, Sergiovanni attempts to categorize and operationalize applied moral leadership. Greenfield summarizes the principle behind these categories of moral educational leadership by explaining, “Moral leadership in schools seeks to bring members of that community together around common purpose in a manner that entails being deliberately moral in one’s conduct toward and with others and oneself, and in the service or purpose and activities that seek to meet the best needs of all children and adults.” (Greenfield, 2004, pp. 179)

In relation to moral educational leadership in poor communities, an educational leader must understand the theory of social reproduction. This is because it is essential to understand the societal constructs and constraints placed on poor students and communities in order to best serve the needs of these students and communities. Burns (1978) explains that when the values, needs, and wants of those that are led are truly considered, it is likely that with effective leadership these wants, needs, and values can be fulfilled in a way that will challenge the status quo and bring about social change. Greenfield gives a description of how this applies to moral educational leadership by explaining “A major part of the school administrator’s moral responsibility is to help the school define and develop itself as a learning community, to help members of that community make meaning of their worlds and reinvent their schools for the twenty-first century.” (Greenfield, 1999, pp. 8)

An educational leader must first understand social reproduction before they can teach and apply the concepts to the school and community they work within. Starratt narrows the concept of a moral leader’s responsibility to teach and illuminate those they lead to apply more directly to social class and school leadership.

“If schools are to teach the larger connections- connections to our ancestors, to the biosphere, to the cultural heros of the past, to the agenda of the future- they must begin with connections of everyday experiences, the connections to our peers, extended families, to the cultural dynamics of our neighborhoods, and to the politics and economics and technology in the homes and on the streets of the neighborhood. In other words, they have to learn to understand the life world of their immediate environment, how people relate to authority, to beauty, to nature, and to conflict.”

(Starratt, 1996, pp. 77)

This is to say, to practice moral leadership when working in poor communities, educational leaders must either directly or indirectly teach their students and community about social reproduction as well as the means by which they can individually and institutionally combat this societal pattern. Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) explain that educational leaders need to own a level of expertise when discussing educational matters with those not trained in the field. The authors term this confidence in knowledge becoming the “public’s intellect”. Principals can engage in active moral leadership and being the public’s intellects through their roles as instructional leader, steward of school culture and climate, and facilitator of community relations.

Furthermore, in understanding the theory, definition, and application of ethical educational leadership, it is essential to differentiate between moral leadership as a dichotomy versus moral leadership as an approach. This is to say, referring to a moral leader or leadership style does not to implicitly define other leaders or leadership styles as immoral. Rather, referring to moral leadership among educational administrators is to refer to a leadership framework in which one can understand the values, perspective, and goals in which that leader is likely to prescribe to and engage in. The distinction between educational leaders who actively engage in moral leadership versus those who do not does not rest in a distinction between leaders who practice ethically versus those who do not.

Willower (1994) explains that there is morality in all decisions and that education administration is in and of itself an ethical undertaking. However, some educational leaders are more conscious of their decisions being ethical ones. Moreover, even within this subset of educational leaders who are aware of their practice as an ethical

undertaking, are those that actively apply this understanding to their leadership style, approach, and priorities. These leaders are much more likely to see the inherent complexity in making moral decisions; and therefore, more likely to engage in a comprehensive consideration and application of the multiple ethical paradigms, which were explored earlier, These leaders are considered to be leaders who engage in educational moral leadership.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Study

This qualitative study focused on how principals in poor communities see their role as facilitators of upward social mobility. The study sought to clarify if and how personal attributes, such as demographic information and personal beliefs and ethics, impact the degree to which principals working in poor communities view their role as challengers to social reproduction. The researcher attempted to determine the degree to which the geography and culture of the community and school impact the principal's view of social reproduction. The researcher utilized qualitative research as the process to determine the variables that impact a principal's view and engagement with or against social reproduction in the poor communities in which they work.

A qualitative research design was utilized because of its ability to consider nuanced variables, which may be unknown to even those who the variables are directly affecting. Maxwell (1996) explains that qualitative research helps to understand the complete context of a situation, including even those phenomena and influences that are unknown and unanticipated. Merriam (1998) compares qualitative research to an uncharted ocean, on which the investigator must determine what variables and factors are to be considered, and with what weight, to create a map by which to follow.

The rationale for this study is found in the importance of understanding the explicit as well as the subtle variables that affect the degree to which school leaders, namely principals, view their role as challenging social reproduction. Patton (2002) reports qualitative studies allow, “the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what those dimensions will be” (p. 56). This study attempted to determine how principals view their role as challengers to social reproduction in the poor communities in which they work and why the views may vary among the principals who are interviewed.

Yin (2003) explains case studies are based on “how” and “why” inquires. In this study, the researcher aspired to establish how principals in poor communities view their role as facilitators of upward social mobility, or challengers of social reproduction, for their students. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to determine why the views differed among the principals involved in this study. Caldwell (2007) notes case studies require a bounded event. This study examined the views of 12 principals, whose schools were evenly divided among rural, suburban, and urban poor communities across New Jersey. The study utilized information gleaned from the collection of historical and demographic documents, interviews, and observations.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher on this study is currently a doctorate student at Temple University. At the time of this study, the researcher was employed as a school psychologist and Coordinator of the Child Study Team at a small public school in southern New Jersey. After spending the majority of her professional career in the New Jersey public education

system, first as a teacher and now as a school psychologist, the researcher has a working understanding and degree of familiarity with the New Jersey public education system.

The researcher has a possible bias in relation to how principals in poor communities may view their role in challenging social reproduction in their communities. The bias of the researcher is that the public education system is a key component in creating opportunity for America's children; and therefore, should actively work towards challenging social reproduction in poor communities. It is unreasonable and implausible to expect the researcher to have no philosophical or rational perspective on this topic.

The researcher took great care to address the issue of validity in the data collection, analysis, and reporting. During data collection, the researcher prepared appropriate interview questions, which allowed for the greatest possible degree of neutrality during the interviewing process. The interview protocol was peer reviewed in an effort to ensure this neutrality. Throughout the reporting of this study's findings, the researcher shared her analysis with her dissertation committee in an effort to maintain neutrality and validity.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was 12 elementary school principals who were working in schools that received Title 1 funding. The school districts that receive Title 1 funding were identified through the New Jersey Department of Education Electronic Web-Enabled Grant System (EWEG). As its name implies, EWEG is an electronic database that registers and processes all educational grants in New Jersey. Therefore, since Title 1 funds are awarded through grant applications, all Title 1 school districts in

New Jersey must register with EWEG. EWEG is able to consolidate grant information and generate lists quickly. Due to the agile nature in which EWEG processes information, a list of schools in New Jersey that used Title 1 funding in the 2007-2008 school year was available to utilize for research.

For the purposes of this study, the principals chosen to participate were working in districts that were evenly divided by geographic location. Specifically, there were four rural elementary schools, four suburban elementary schools, and four urban elementary schools chosen. The similarity of the socio-economic status of the communities these schools are located in provided the researcher with a shared context. Furthermore, clustering four schools in each of the geographic areas allowed the researcher to examine patterns between and within each geographic location

Once a complete list of New Jersey schools that receive Title 1 funding was acquired, U.S. Census data from 2000 was used to identify and separate schools into rural, suburban, and urban categories. Convenience sampling was utilized in the identification of the subjects of this study. This is to say, principals were chosen based on their geographic proximity to the Southern New Jersey area. Principals were contacted through email to inquire about their willingness to participate in this research study. Once a complete list of four willing participants was established in all three demographic categories, an appropriate meeting time and location was scheduled with each of the participating principals and the interviews commenced.

Data Collection

The data collection for this qualitative study consisted of information collection of historical and demographic documents, interviews, field notes, and observations.

Demographic and historical information was gathered about each school and their respective communities. The information collected through the above named processes contributed to layered and richly descriptive data that helped determine how and why principals working in poor communities may or may not see their role as challengers to the propensity for social reproduction in their communities.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) with each of the participating principals during the spring and summer of 2008, which lasted for approximately one hour. The interview began with an opportunity for the principal to tell the researcher about themselves, both personally and professionally, in an effort to put them at ease as well as develop baseline demographic knowledge, which contributed to the research findings. The interviewer then utilized a semi-structured approach and finally ended in open-ended questions focused around ethical dilemmas.

The semi-structured questions included probes that were utilized to pursue depth and clarity in each principal's answers. Some of these probes were built into the interview protocol (See Appendix C) whereas others were used on an individual basis and specifically related to the answer pattern of the principal being interviewed. The interview questions were focused on obtaining a working understanding of how each principal views their role in challenging the propensity of social reproduction in the communities they work within as well as identifying what factors, personally and professionally, have contributed to the development of their perspective. The interview

questions only directed probed each principals understanding of social capital not cultural capital. All the interviews were audiotaped with permission from the participants. The interviews were then transcribed to allow for more in-depth analysis. After each interview, the researcher recorded field notes including observations and impressions of each community, school, and principal.

Data Analysis

In an effort to determine the degree to which principals in poor communities view their role as facilitators of upward social mobility for their students, the researcher utilized historical and demographic documents and data, observations, and interviews. The interview data was transcribed to allow for close review. The data was then coded. Maxwell (2005) explains the purpose of coding to be, “a process during which the researcher fractures the initial text into discrete segments and resorts it into categories” (p.98).

With all data gathered, the constant comparative method was utilized. Glaser & Strauss (1967) explains the constant comparative method as a process during which the researcher looks for overarching categories that allows the data to be formulated into areas of impact. Patton (2002) further clarifies the purpose of the constant comparative method by explaining,

“[the constant comparative method] is used to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the case under study without presupposing in advance what the dimensions will be. . . . Rather, it means that the qualitative inquirer consciously works back and forth between parts and wholes, separate variables and complex interwoven constellations of variables in a sorting out then putting back together process.” (Patton, 2002, p.67)

The transcriptions for each demographic area were color coded into a shade of the same primary color. Once these transcripts were color coded, line continuums were created for interview questions. Then each principal's respective answer was cut out and placed where it belonged on the continuum. For example, for the interview question regarding years experience, a continuum that read least to most was generated and the principals answers related to years experience were placed appropriately on the line. The visual that was created allowed the researcher to analyze patterns and engage in the constant comparative method more effectively.

After the data was coded and compared, the researcher utilized descriptive statistics to report and explain the patterns found in the analysis. Relationships and descriptive correlations between variables and their impact on the phenomenon were thoroughly explored and reported using descriptive statistics. The researcher then sought to uncover any patterns or relationships shared with the findings of the literature review. Although the researcher acknowledges the importance of previous research and the possibility to contribute to the literature concerning this subject matter, this study is not generalizable and will stand independently as an important event in its own.

Methods of Verification

The researcher approached the data collection and analysis of this study with a neutral and unbiased perspective in an effort not to sway or manipulate the findings. Although it is reasonable to assume the researcher holds a degree of personal and professional opinion about the research topic, these beliefs were clearly identified by the researcher and actively monitored and controlled throughout the research process by

participating in member checks. The monitoring of the researcher's attitudes, beliefs, and reactions helped to insure the participants will not react to what they believe is expected and/or wanted from them by the researcher.

Rather, the researcher collected rich data through immersing herself in the research and literature relevant to this study as well as intensive involvement with the participating principals and their schools and communities. This involvement included collecting historical and demographic information about the communities and schools as well as descriptive documents and information about the schools, such as mission statements and visions, and observations of the communities and schools. Interviews with the principals, during which interventions and ethical dilemmas were utilized, were also used.

The information obtained from each research subject was triangulated in an effort to establish validity and to create a comprehensive understanding of the data. The data derived from the interviews and field observations was examined through the use of the constant comparative method. The researcher actively searched for discrepant evidence and negative cases in relation to each individual case as well as to the global findings to ensure all variables were incorporated into the findings.

The data extracted from each individual case as well as how these individual findings relate to one another, specifically through the use of the constant comparative method, was summated and reported through the use of descriptive statistics. As the findings were determined, the researcher diligently searched for a wide range of findings in the literature in an effort to unveil any research which argues counter to this study's findings.

The researcher shared the transcripts of each interview with the corresponding participant. The researcher also share inferences and findings generated from the interviews and field notes with appropriate participating principals. This worked toward ensuring accuracy between participants intended or perceived message and the researchers interpreted message. These considerations strengthened the accuracy and honest representation of participants during the data analysis and integration stage.

Ethical Issues

This research engaged in the study of human subjects. Therefore, the researcher conducted herself in an ethical and professional manner consistently throughout the study. The researcher completed the Human Research Curriculum Training offered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on October 2, 2007 to ensure understanding the importance of and procedures for the ethical study of human subjects. Furthermore, the application to conduct research involving human subjects was submitted to Temple's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approved in the spring of 2008 (Appendix A and B). The IRB protocol number for this project is 11660.

There was a great amount of respect towards the confidentiality of all data gathered, especially that which could negatively impact a participant. Pseudonyms were utilized to maintain the anonymity of all communities, schools, and principals. Participation in this study was voluntary and based on each participant fully understanding the context of this study. Each participant was required to sign a consent form noting they understand the purpose and rationale of the study and that their participation is fully voluntary, and may be terminated at any time. All data collected has

been kept in a locked cabinet, which is only accessible to the researcher. All data will be destroyed within three years of the completion of this study.

Outcome of Study and Its Relation to Theory and Literature

This study strived to determine how principals who work in poor communities view their role as challengers to social reproduction in their communities. Furthermore, the researcher sought to determine what variables affect a principal's perspective on this subject. Understanding gleaned from this study will help to contribute to the understanding of how principals who work in poor communities view and act upon the phenomenon of social reproduction in their communities.

It is the hope of the researcher that the data derived from this study will contribute to building a literature base that will establish an understanding of how educational leaders view the important phenomenon of social reproduction in America. Although there is a significant amount of research focused on social reproduction in America, there is very little, if any, research on how principals view their job in relation to challenging social reproduction or providing upward social mobility. Therefore, this study strived to create an understanding of the beliefs and attitudes principals working in poor communities have towards social reproduction, and namely, their role in challenging the phenomenon.

Summary

The impact of a principal has been widely studied for decades. However, there is little research that examines how principals, specifically those working in poor

communities, view their role as challenging the propensity for social reproduction in the marginalized communities in which they work. The researcher believes this is an area in need of further examination and that this study can contribute to the literature concerning principal's perspectives on their role in social reproduction and/or upward social mobility. This qualitative study of 12 principals from rural, suburban, and urban school districts that receive Title 1 funding may contribute to the larger literature regarding educational leadership and its impact on social reproduction.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to: 1) gather and analyze data on how principals working in poor communities define success for their students as well as how they view their role in providing social mobility for their students; and 2) to determine how the response of each principal is impacted by the individual's alignment with moral leadership. In this study, the data collection occurred through conducting semi-structured interviews, observations, examining artifacts and documents, and generating field notes from site visits.

Each interview was transcribed, which allowed the researcher to closely analyze the data. Data analysis is described as “examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study” (Yin, 1994, pp. 105). The data analysis was executed utilizing Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant compared method. Merriam (1998) explains the constant comparative as a process by which:

“The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or documentation and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances.” (pp. 159)

The analysis of the data is presented in this chapter in several sections. The first section is entitled “Characteristics” and focuses on the demographic information of each school visited as well as each principal interviewed.

The second section, entitled “Portraits of Principals”, illustrates individual portraits of the twelve principals that were interviewed for this study. The portraits are presented in a narrative format. The primary sources of information for these narrative portraits are the field notes generated from each site visited as well as the personal and professional background, experience, perceptions, and beliefs that were shared by each principal during the interviews. The information gleaned from these interviews is then compared and contrasted.

The final section of the chapter is entitled “Findings”. This section examines the patterns and findings that emerged from the analysis of the data gathered. The categories that emerged from the coding and analysis of data are organized into graphic displays. Specifically, the data that lends itself to answer the research questions is isolated and the strength of the relationship between the research question and the data is highlighted. The graphic displays are supported by a presentation of the findings as they relate to each research question.

Characteristics

This study was limited to twelve sites and included one administrator from each site for a total of twelve elementary school principals. The twelve sites were evenly divided among rural, suburban, and urban communities and were located in six counties throughout New Jersey. The data derived from semi-structured interviews, information gathered from a collection of historical and demographic documents, and field notes provided information that was foundational in its categorical construction and understanding of each school.

Table 4.1 shows the similarities and differences of each school, specifically in the areas of community demographic area, total student population, and percentage of low-income students.

Table 4.1 School Characteristics

<i>School Name</i>	<i>Demographic Area</i>	<i>Total Student Population</i>	<i>Faculty/Student Ratio</i>	<i>% of Low-income students</i>
Springs	Rural	141	7.3:1	12.3%
Creeks	Rural	258	10.2:1	32.7%
Rivers	Rural	311	11.4:1	26.5%
Streams	Rural	488	9.4:1	34.6%
Cherry Tree	Suburban	505	13.2:1	16.4%
Apple Tree	Suburban	356	9.5:1	37.2%
Pear Tree	Suburban	359	11.2:1	22.1%
Peach Tree	Suburban	559	10.8:1	24.3%
JFK	Urban	515	10.3:1	36%
MLK	Urban	494	9.6:1	38.4%
FDR	Urban	644	11.4:1	32.8%
Lincoln	Urban	701	10.1:1	37.1%

The number of students in each school ranged from 141 to 701; the faculty to student ratio ranged from 7.3 to 1 to 13.2 to 1; and the percent of low-income students ranged from 12.3 percent to more than 38.4 percent, which would qualify the school to receive Title 1 funding.

Each principal interviewed presented a unique set of data pertaining to age, race, gender, level of education, years experience in administration, socio-economic status growing up, and present socio-economic status. The ages of the principals interviewed ranged from 35 to 58. The race of the principals interviewed broke down as: eight White, two African American, and two Hispanic. There were eight female principals interviewed versus four male principals. The level of education varied with eight principals having

achieved their masters degree as the highest level of education obtained and four having achieved their doctorate. The years experience in administration varied greatly, ranging from two to thirty. The socio-economic status, both in childhood and presently, remained fairly consistent among the principals with all reporting themselves in the range of middle class.

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Principals

<i>Principal</i>	<i>School (Area)</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Yrs Exp.</i>	<i>Family SES</i>	<i>Current SES</i>
Mika	Springs (R)	37	W	M	Doctorate	5	Middle	Middle
Amber	Creeks (R)	56	W	F	Doctorate	30	Upper middle	Middle
Pearl	Rivers (R)	58	W	F	Doctorate	20	Middle	Middle
Garnett	Streams (R)	48	W	M	Masters	1	Middle	Working class
Lilly	Cherry Tree (S)	35	B	F	Doctorate	8	Middle	Middle
Rose	Apple Tree (S)	37	H	F	Masters	2	Middle	Middle
Rowan	Pear Tree (S)	38	W	M	Masters	5	Lower middle	Middle
Iris	Peach Tree (S)	37	W	F	Masters	3	Middle	Middle
Jackie	JFK (U)	36	B	F	Masters	2	Middle	Middle
Coretta	MLK (U)	56	W	F	Masters	6	Middle	Upper Middle
Eleanor	FDR (U)	42	W	F	Masters	11	Middle	Middle
Abraham	Lincoln (U)	44	H	M	Doctorate	4	Working class	Middle

Portraits

In this section of this chapter, I will describe the individual school buildings as well as the school administrators that participated in this study. The narrative summation of the schools and administrators found in this section constitutes the majority of

evidence gathered throughout the study. The primary methods through which the following information was obtained include semi-structured interviews, observations, and field notes.

Prior to reviewing the data gathered from each site and principal, it is important to note that each interview was audio-taped, which allowed for transcription and in-depth analysis. Furthermore, field notes and observations were recorded almost immediately after visiting each site and principal in an effort to record impressions as quickly as possible to maintain integrity. It is also important to again note the use of pseudonyms for each school building, principal, and any other identifying piece of demographic information. The use of pseudonyms was employed to protect the confidentiality of all participants.

The Portraits are organized into demographic areas. This is to say, all of the rural principals and their corresponding schools and communities will be described first. Next, I will describe all of the suburban principals as well as their buildings and communities. Finally, the urban principals, their communities, and school buildings will be explored. The principals are not organized in a specific fashion within each demographic category.

Portrait 1: Dr. Mika and Springs School (Rural)

While driving to Springs School, the scenery changed from suburban to rural fairly quickly. The suburban area that I traveled through to reach the school held newer, custom homes. Once these upscale homes were passed, I passed through fields for miles. Upon entering Springs Town, it became apparent that the homes associated with this school were not new. Rather, they were well cared for, turn of the century houses that

held a great amount of charm. The charm was magnified by the beautifully planted and well manicured lawns. To reach the school building, I had to drive through the small downtown, which housed the heart of the community. The downtown consisted of approximately 20 store fronts that sold goods ranging from coffee and tea, used books, and antiques to name a few. While driving through the downtown there were multiple groups of people gathered, for what I could only assume was neighbors who had stopped to greet each other on their walk through the town.

Approximately a half mile from the heart of Springs Town stood Springs School. The school was a small one story brick building with a fairly nondescript exterior and landscape. However, upon entering the school building, which I did through unlocked doors, it became clear that the outside of the building did not reflect the interior. In the entrance way was a large and beautiful quilt that was completed by community members and donated to the school. Moreover, through out all the hallways, children's' art work was hung on bulletin boards as well as framed. The office was located close to the front door and housed the administrative secretary who greeted me by name while simultaneously confirming my appointment. Once my appointment was confirmed, she promptly walked me across the hall to the principal's office.

Upon entering the principal's office, which was large and very stately with wood paneling and built-in bookshelves, I meet Dr. Mika. Dr. Mika is a young principal who presented himself as very energetic. He popped up from behind his desk immediately and welcomed me and offered me a chair. Dr. Mika was open and eager to speak with me. He seemed very forthcoming and offered his answers quickly, although thoughtfully.

Dr. Mika has worked in educational administration for five years. Prior to assuming an administrative post, he was a math teacher and then a computer science teacher. He describes the role of the principal as “an instructional leader who plays a very important role in school development and ensuring an optimal learning environment”. Although he is “very, very satisfied” with his current position, Dr. Mika has aspirations to become a curriculum director in a larger school district. In an effort to improve his current effectiveness and career development, Dr. Mika had just completed a doctorate program at the local state university.

Throughout our conversation, Dr. Mika frequently referred to the need to maintain a comprehensive view of the child. However, he would balance this with his strong conviction that good teaching is measurable. He explained that, “Teaching is part science and part art but I think what NCLB has allowed is for us to start putting more of our eggs in the science basket. The more we learn the more we realize that teaching is a science.” When he was asked to define what success would be for him he noted that meeting the needs of all his individual students is his goal. When asked what success would look like for his students he explained that it needed to go beyond only the test scores. “The daily functioning of each student in their ability to get a good job and have a nice home and family and basically to have the resources to be able to live the life that they want for themselves.”

When Dr. Mika was asked to describe his relationship with parents and the community, he highlighted how important he felt open and honest communication is and further expressed his commitment to the parents and community as being “beyond professional, it really is a personal connection”. This personal connection that is

grounded in accessibility and effective communication was echoed in his views of his relationships with teachers and students. Dr. Mika described his relationship with teachers and students as being “strong” and “excellent because I really get to know them as individuals”, respectively.

Dr. Mika also reported having an excellent relationship with the administrators at the receiving high school his students attend, which is in another school district. He explained, “I felt strongly that we need to pay attention to our common goals and focus on how we can mutually work towards them. For example, right now I’m working out how we can best share data and make sure we have open communication back and forth and I intend to continue to move in that direction.” When asked how his students do in the high school, Dr. Mika noted that they do very well but he would like to work towards easing the transition for them.

He reported that beyond high school, 85% of his students go on to a traditional four year college and 10% go on to a two year college. He split the remaining five percent between “entry level trades and military”. Dr. Mika reported that he was very proud of these percentages because he felt a large part of his job was to “provide the training that these kids need in order to have access to the resources to live the lives they imagine for themselves. As an educational leader, I really see myself as a facilitator of opportunity”.

Dr. Mika’s focus on the individual student’s well being as well as the well being of the entire school and community at large were mirrored by the ethical paradigms he utilized when solving vignettes exploring ethical dilemmas. This is to say, the ethic of care and the ethic of community were ethical lenses utilized by Dr. Mika. Specifically,

when asked about ethical dilemmas, Dr. Mika consistently framed his resolutions by focusing on how the decision would affect students and the community.

Principal 2: Dr. Amber and Creeks School (Rural)

While driving to Creeks School it was clear that the school was in a rural setting. In fact, there was a poorly paved almost dirt road that extended approximately 4 miles on my way to the school. On this road, I saw a few houses spaced far apart and one rather large trailer park. When I entered the school parking lot, it was clear to see that someone took great care with the grounds, which were beautifully landscaped. The school, a one story brick building, had a large welcome sign hanging across the front doors.

Upon entering through unlocked, open doors, I immediately found the main office, which was directly across the hall from the front doors. The outer office housed two secretaries and two offices, one for Dr. Amber and the other for the assistant principal. The secretaries were extremely friendly and conversational. In the few minutes I waited for Dr. Amber to get off a conference call, both secretaries had checked on my comfort level and offered me water. While I waited I took the opportunity to walk around the hallways of the school, which was in the process of being painted.

There was obviously no summer school or camp activity happening on the day I arrived as there were no students to be seen. Furthermore, the hallways and classrooms were in such a state that a student's presence would not have been safe. Although I was not able to get a sense of what the school would look and feel like during the school year, I was able to see that the classrooms were large and bright. The hallways also had numerous spots to display the work and achievements of the students.

When Dr. Amber finished her conference call, she immediately invited me into her office. The office walls were covered with personal artifacts, pictures, and certificates of achievement. There was a large book shelf in her office that was overflowing with books and Dr. Amber's desk seemed to be overflowing as well. Dr. Amber was a mature woman who presented herself as very busy but simultaneously focused on our meeting. She was very thoughtful and would often pause to think before answering questions. Overall, she seemed to be a very reflective, deep thinking individual.

Dr. Amber has had an almost thirty year career in education that has included experience in the classroom, numerous positions in administration, as well as positions at the state level. She has been in her current position for three years. Within the past few years, Dr. Amber completed her doctorate degree in educational administration. She attributes an intrinsic desire to learn and her goal oriented personality with motivating her to finish her terminal degree so late in her career.

Dr. Amber described the role of the principal as "critical" and as a position that can have "an enormous impact on the community and children". When asked about her level of job satisfaction, Dr. Amber indicated that she was very happy in her position. In fact, she was so happy that she reported she plans to retire from her present post. When asked to define success for herself, Dr. Amber listed some of her accomplishments, both personal and professional. She also acknowledged that she pushed gender boundaries throughout her career, which was something she saw as a "lasting accomplishment".

When Dr. Amber defined success for her students, she highlighted the students' ability to, "pursue their own goals and be able to reach the achievements they want". Dr. Amber qualified her relationship with the community as "positive" and her relationship

with the teachers as “great”, which she was especially thankful for since she, “inherited most of them from the previous administration”. “Really good, a great relationship” is how Dr. Amber summed up her impressions of her relationship with the students.

Dr. Amber also feels that she has a good working relationship with the central office building administrators of the high school her students attend. She feels the communication has become stronger with the hiring of new administrators in the receiving high school. Dr. Amber also attributed the increase in communication and articulation to a grant the two districts share that demands weekly meetings. Dr. Amber was clear that she did not believe that the quality of the communication was impacted negatively or positively whether the articulation was self-initiated or imposed. She believes that “any communication is going to benefit the students”.

Dr. Amber proudly reported that her students are usually in the top 10% of the graduating class. From the graduating class, Dr. Amber noted approximately 85% go on to some sort of post-secondary education. She believes the state run Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (STARS) program, which provides full scholarships to students with certain GPA’s to attend two year community colleges, greatly increases her student’s ability to access higher education. Dr. Amber explained that she felt a major component of her role as a school administrator was to make as many opportunities available to students as possible. Although she noted that there are some very active and supportive parents in her community, she believes that as an education expert, she has the skills and the knowledge base to, “really help to start opening our students’ eyes to the possibilities” of different career paths.

When asked to resolve two ethical dilemmas, Dr. Amber utilized the frameworks of the ethic of care and the ethic of community. For example, when she was asked how she would contribute to a debate between funds going to college prep classes or a work study program she responded by saying,

“I think the most important thing is to see what the student and community needs are. I would want a full needs assessment conducted to determine which program would best serve our students and the community. Obviously, if it is at all possible I think building our focus and opportunities for college is excellent but as an administrator it is essential to look at all the students and the culture of the school and see how the majority of individuals could benefit.”

Dr. Amber’s focus on the students and her drive to positively impact as many students as possible was apparent throughout the interview.

Principal 3: Dr. Pearl and Rivers School (Rural)

The drive to Rivers School was very pleasant and reminiscent of a Norman Rockwell image of Americana. The road to the school took me through two small towns with vibrant main streets. Being that the day was beautiful, there were a lot of people walking the sidewalks and window shopping. There was an ease with the towns that clearly drew people to visit and to bring their families for a pleasant day out. Only about two miles from the second town was the sharp right hand turn that would lead me to Rivers School.

Rivers School was approximately 10 minutes from the nearest town but those ten minutes were spent driving through what seemed like nothing but fields and horse farms. Upon pulling into the parking lot it became painfully apparent that the school needed to invest in its grounds and more specifically its parking lot and walkways. After hitting two

potholes, one which was fairly substantial, I pulled into a parking spot. The walkway to the school was equally neglected. Conversely, once inside the school, the atmosphere was open and bright. Although it was summer, there were students in the hallways and the office was bustling with people.

Inside the main office, the secretary quickly contacted Dr. Pearl to announce my arrival. Dr. Pearl emerged from her office and asked for my patience and if I would mind waiting a few minutes as she was in the middle of handling a situation that required immediate attention. I assured her that I would be fine and she quickly smiled a very warm smile and gave what felt like sincere appreciation.

After about thirty minutes, Dr. Pearl emerged with a parent and the assistant principal. All parties were smiling and the parent thanked Dr. Pearl for her help more than once before leaving. As soon as the parent had left the office, Dr. Pearl turned to me and thanked me for my patience and invited me into her office. Her office was full of bright colors and posters handmade from children as well as framed posters of famous works of art.

Dr. Pearl presented herself as bright and cheerful with a true ability to connect immediately with a person. She was soft spoken and made the impression that she would not demand attention when in a crowd. However, once our conversation began, it became apparent that throughout her twenty year career she was indeed a presence to be reckoned with. She described herself as an “innovator” who really “challenges the status quo and likes to shake things up”. She reported that her maverick approach has been with her throughout her career, which started in a classroom and quickly branched into leadership roles as her bosses along the way mentored her to take on promotions into administration.

She credits “getting bored and knowing that I could do the job in my sleep” as a primary motivator to move on and take the leadership position she currently holds.

This drive to push her limits and build upon her ability is also what drove her to earn her doctorate degree. She also credits an “intrinsic motivation” and “goal and task oriented behavior” with helping her complete the doctorate program. In her opinion, this goal oriented behavior has also helped her be successful in her current position. She sees the role of a principal as “critical, especially in a small school such as this one. The principal really sets the tone and sets the climate and I think that can have an enormous impact, which I have ultimately been able to do here.” She reports that she “loves” her school and feels the community is “lovely”. She has intentions on working in her current position until she retires, at which point she wants to move into her second career, which will be a professorship.

When asked to define success for herself, Dr. Pearl highlights her doctorate degree as well as the trajectory of her career, which she feels “pressed the limits of leadership positions that women previously did not have access to.” When asked to qualify success for her students, Dr. Pearl responded by saying,

“I think the short-sightedness of education now is this focus on test scores and whether or not a student is smart enough to reach these somewhat arbitrary goals. I think we need to expand our focus to include how students are doing once they are outside of school and how well they are applying what they have learned and what sort of opportunities their education has created for them. I think on an individual school level we really need to start identifying what factors contribute to student success beyond just the test scores. We need to get a comprehensive list of what makes a student successful like are they functioning to their fullest, are they well adjusted, are they active citizens and do they contribute to their community and are they confident and can they handle themselves out in the world.”

Dr. Pearl reports having a “very good” relationship with the students as well as a “healthy and positive” relationship with the teaching staff, which she feels is based on a foundation of trust, communication and consistency. Her summation of her relationship with parents and the community mirrors her perspective of her relationships within the school building as being “positive”. She further credits her positive relationship with the parents and community as being based on “trust and open and honest communication”.

Dr. Pearl also reports actively working on forming positive and communicative relationships with the administrators of the district in which her students attend high school. She feels “it’s really so important that we keep an eye on our students so we can tell if they are succeeding and that’s how we can gauge if we are succeeding”. Although she noted that there was little articulation between the elementary and secondary administrators prior to her tenure, she is proud to report that the relationship and communication is moving in a “positive direction” with “still some work to be done”.

She reports that her students do “very well at the high school and are very successful.” As far as postsecondary education is concerned, Dr. Pearl notes that approximately 80 to 85 percent of her students pursue some post secondary. However, she does note that this number can fluctuate tremendously due to the small size of the classes. Although this number is relatively high, she was insistent that it is not enough for educational leaders to just look at that number and feel as if they are successful. Dr. Pearl believes it is imperative for educational leaders to follow students beyond admission for post secondary education and actually track their success rates in their post secondary pursuits to determine if the students have been properly prepared and to then assess the primary and secondary education success rates.

As a foundation of her practice, Dr. Pearl consistently relied on the ethic of critique and the ethic of care as well as the ethic of community. When she was asked to project how she would handle a case of a consistently truant student, Dr. Pearl quickly noted,

“At the elementary level, we really need to look beyond the student and focus on the family when it comes to issues like this. It is very possible that there is something going on in the family like a car broken down or parents working the night shift and getting home late that could result in this student getting to school late so that would be where I would start.”

When another ethical scenario was presented to Dr. Pearl regarding a choice between establishing an honors program or a work study program at the high school, her response was,

“I feel that the program that would be established would have to align with the ways and means of the community and be focused on serving our students the best way we can. I would want to start by looking at data about the individual students we service to decide how they would best be served.”

Principal 4: Mr. Garnett and Streams School (rural)

When traveling to Streams School, I took the same roads as I did in my journey to Springs School. I passed through the same upper-middle class and executive suburban developments, which gave way to open roads winding through open fields for miles. However, to get to Streams School I had to stay on the open rural roads for much longer. On these roads I passed working farms with tractors plowing the fields and pastures of cows and a few homes with stables fenced off for horses. The school was located down a series of rural roads that did not have proper names, rather they were only identified every few miles with a numbered sign.

When I came upon the school, it stood out clearly from the old farmhouses that had littered the roadside the past few miles. The school was a one story brick building that was oddly shaped, which made me believe there had been numerous small scale additions made throughout the decades. After I parked in the small parking area in front of the school, I walked into the building through open doors. Once in the building I was able to find the office easily.

In the main area of the office were two secretaries. One of the secretaries asked with a smile if she could help me, when I explained I was there to meet Mr. Garnett she had to consult with the other secretary to find where he was. Eventually, she had to call over a walkie-talkie to contact Mr. Garnett to let him know I was there for our meeting. Mr. Garnett arrived in the office approximately fifteen minutes later explaining that he was outside playing with the students. He was a tall man who carried himself slightly hunched over. He was casually dressed and his hair was a bit disheveled. With long strides, he walked me back to his office. However, we were unable to find a seat due to piles of books and paperwork that almost overtook the room.

Once it was determined that we would not be able to use his office, Mr. Garnett walked me to a conference room where we could sit after he moved a few boxes. Mr. Garnett was anxious to speak with me about his perspective and opinions. We spoke for approximately a half hour about some issues that had been occurring in Mr. Garnett's personal life before we were able to transition into the interview. Once the interview began, Mr. Garnett was generous with his time providing a very extensive interview with very expansive answers. During our conversation he often spoke about numerous subjects within a single answer.

Mr. Garnett had spent over a decade owning his own business before going into education. He was a musician by trade and upon entering education assumed the post of a music teacher. He had worked in the position of a music teacher for six years before finishing his masters in administration at which time he became a head teacher at the school he was working in. He shared with me that he looked for a principal position for over two years and had put out over 30 applications before being offered the position he has currently held for only a year.

Mr. Garnett found his current position “very rewarding” and explained his ambition to be a principal was closely related to his experience with owning his own business. “I think after being my own boss for so long it was just natural that I would want to be in charge again. Once you know how to run a business and have people working for you it’s really hard to take orders from someone else, especially if that person isn’t good at what they do.” Mr. Garnett closely associated his new found authority with his level of job satisfaction.

When asked about the importance of the principal, Mr. Garnett shared his understanding of leadership styles and highlighted his preference for the transformational leader. When pressed further for his own summation of the role a principal plays, Mr. Garnett noted that he believed a good principal “should help everyone achieve their goals. This includes the teachers, the students and the parents”. When Mr. Garnett was asked to relate his definition of personal success he again listed numerous types of success without providing a concrete answer to which one would apply to his perspective or any details about how each would be defined. When asked for clarity, Mr. Garnett

simplified his answer by saying, “I guess just to know that I made a difference in some way”.

Mr. Garnett was much more concrete in his answer when asked to explain what constitutes a student’s success. To this question, he replied, “To make sure they are intact and working to their ability and doing the best that they can.” When asked if he was successful in facilitating this, Mr. Garnett replied, “I try”. He noted that he has an “excellent” relationship with the students and that they “high five me when they see me in the hallway”. He also reported he has struggled with some teachers but that the relationship with the teachers as individuals is “pretty strong now”. He was very anecdotal in his answer regarding his relationship with the community. Instead of broadly summarizing the overall relationship, Mr. Garnett discussed some parents that he has had difficulty with and the specific situations that he believes caused the difficulties.

When Mr. Garnett was asked how his students performed once they left his district and graduated to the neighboring district that housed the high school his students attend, he responded by explaining, “That’s something the superintendent would have more information on. I am responsible for running this building so that is what I mostly focus on.” To an inquiry regarding students’ trajectory once they graduate high school, specifically pertaining to pursuing postsecondary education, he replied, “Again that is something the superintendent is focused on. Right now I don’t have much to do with that because my focus is more on this building.”

Mr. Garnett carried his sharp focus on his immediate job description and responsibilities over to his approach of ethically complicated situations, which resulted in him relying primarily on the ethic of justice. For example, when asked how he would

handle a situation involving a student who was excessively tardy, Mr. Garnett outlined the school code of conduct in relation to tardiness and then added, “Maybe I would have to call in DFYS or involve some sort of law enforcement.” Furthermore, when he was asked how he would prioritize the choice between establishing honors classes or work study courses at the high school, Mr. Garnett cited the limitation in his jurisdiction over these decisions. When pressed to explore the hypothetical situation as if he did have powerful input, Mr. Garnett primarily focused on following the direction of the Department of Education and noted, per state trends, a vocational high school should offer the work study; and therefore, he would want to offer honor courses.

Principal 5: Dr. Lilly and Cherry Tree School (Suburban)

My drive to Cherry Tree School took me on business roads and past numerous shopping centers. To reach the school building, I had to drive through a development that consisted of single family homes that appeared to be primarily built in the 1950’s. The lawns were well taken care of but there was certainly a no-frills atmosphere to the neighborhood. It was a neighborhood that I could easily image a game of stick ball happening in the streets of during summertime.

There was a long road leading from the development into the parking lot of the school. On this road, I passed what appeared to be a baseball field as well as a soccer field. Once I was directly in front of the school I was able to see a playground that was built for primary age children in the front of the school surrounded by a wire fence. The landscape was minimal, although what was present seemed to be manicured. Upon

attempting to enter the front doors, I found them locked and needed to press an intercom to gain entrance.

The school was clean with children's work displayed prominently in the front lobby. There was also a large banner declaring pride for the school displayed above a center display case. The office was located close to the front door and was easily identifiable from signs. There was one secretary in the main section of the office who was very friendly and immediately explained to me that Dr. Lilly would be with me as soon as she was done her meeting with the two interns she was mentoring throughout the summer.

In a few moments, Dr. Lilly's meeting with her interns ended and she came out of the office to greet me. She apologized for the clutter of boxes that were sitting next to my chair and explained that a shipment of texts had arrived and she was waiting for some staff to get them to distribute. At that moment a woman walked in with her teenage daughter and Dr. Lilly introduced us and quickly explained to the woman what she wanted done with the books. As Dr. Lilly and I started to walk into her office another woman entered who was also there to help with the books. This woman had a toddler with her. Dr. Lilly immediately went to the toddler, who seemed to be familiar with her, and began to talk and quickly play with her. It appeared that although there was a hierarchy among the woman in the office, there was also mutual respect and a level of personal friendship.

When Dr. Lilly finished speaking with the teachers and children in the main office, she guided me to her office. She had a large office compared to the ones I have visited so far, which was decorated with personal pictures and bookshelves that were

packed full with books and magazines. We sat down for the interview at a round conference table she had in her office and before we began she asked me some questions about how the research process was going. Since she had recently finished her doctorate degree, she shared some personal insight and experiences as well as some lessons she learned along the way.

Before the interview began, Dr. Lilly asked to see the interview protocol and I obliged. After quickly reviewing the protocol she asked if she could have a copy to read along with throughout the interview. I gave her a copy but informed her that I was prone to not follow the order of questions and to supplement the questions listed with probing questions. Dr. Lilly reported that she understood but felt much more comfortable being able to follow along visually to some degree. Throughout the interview, Dr. Lilly presented herself as controlled and gave answers only after thinking about the question at hand. It was difficult, but not impossible, to get her to expand or interject spontaneous anecdotal support to her points of view.

At the time of our interview, Dr. Lilly had been in her principal position for five years. Prior to her current position, she was an assistant principal for three years. During her tenure as assistant principal, Dr. Lilly completed her doctorate in educational leadership. Although she reports being happy in her current position she also notes that she has “aspirations to pursue a central office position”. One of the reasons attributed to Dr. Lilly’s happiness in her current position is how vital she finds the role of the principal. Dr. Lilly outlines the broad role of the principal as being able to move the school forward. She reports the primary ingredients of being able to achieve this goal are

to make sure to have a shared vision and mission with the teachers, students, and community.

Dr. Lilly defined success as increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gap “so that we can guarantee all students are fulfilling their fullest potential”. She also noted the importance of positive relationships with parents and staff as being vital to achieving this success. When she was asked to summarize what she believes constitutes student success, Dr. Lilly stated,

“You really need to take into account how the whole child functions across numerous settings. If a child is able to be highly functioning or at least function to the best of their abilities across numerous settings then I think that is successful.”

In pursuit of ensuring student success, Dr. Lilly consistently highlighted the importance of relationship building. Dr. Lilly reports her relationship with parent and students as “excellent”. She explains her relationship with teachers as one built on respect. She notes,

“They really respect me as a professional and as long as they know that my decisions are based on the best interest of students even though they may disagree with me on a decision or a request they know at the end of the day every decision I make is for the benefit of the kids.”

Dr. Lilly proudly shares that the investment in what is in the best interest of the children reaps its rewards. Most notably, she reports that two of the previous years eight valedictorians were graduates of Cherry Tree School. Although all students can not be valedictorians, she notes that the vast majority of Cherry Tree School graduates “do very well at the high school”.

Dr. Lilly describes her articulation with the high school her students attend as “excellent”. She notes there are monthly articulation meetings and that the district has highlighted improving articulation even further as a district goal. With this in mind, Dr. Lilly predicted that even though the articulation was presently excellent, it “will continue to improve”. Dr. Lilly was also aware of how many of her students pursue postsecondary education. She reports, “Our district data shows over 90% of students, it may even be as high as 95% of graduating seniors, go onto some sort of post secondary school”. This was something Dr. Lilly took noticeable pride in.

When presented with ethical dilemmas, Dr. Lilly clearly articulated a firm focus on the best interest of the student. She was able to balance her priority on the individual student, or the ethic of care, with a wider perspective of how the community would be affected. For example, when presented with a scenario in which she would have to prioritize either college prep courses or work study course, Dr. Lilly began her answer by highlighting her desire to assess the student’s needs and determine how either program would assist in reaching these needs. She then discussed her opinion that it would be necessary to, “take into consideration the community and how they would perceive either program. It would be very important that we would have their support and that they would feel that we are moving in the same direction with educational priorities”.

Principal 6: Ms. Rose and Apple Tree School (Suburban)

On my ride to Apple Tree School, I drove on two to four lane roads. The school was not far from a major route that was lined with big box stores as well as shopping complexes that housed stores such as Kohl’s and Wal-Mart. The smaller roads leading to

Apple Tree were lined with ranch homes that sat on small plots. These plots held large, mature trees, which gave the impression that the neighborhood was well established. Much like the surrounding neighborhood, Apple Tree School was unimpressive upon its first impression. However, when I took a moment to take in the surroundings, I became aware that the school, a small, one story brick building with an old play gym in front engulfed in cracked cement walkways, felt comfortable in an unintimidating, easy way.

Upon entering the school through doors that were propped open, I found a front lobby with three adults talking. The adults acknowledged my presence with eye contact and nods but did not interrupt their conversation to establish why I was at Apple Tree. Therefore, I walked throughout the hallways, which were lined mostly with plaques, posters, and display cases. Eventually, I found the office after walking past it several times. When I entered the office there was only a very small and undecorated main office. In this main office hub sat a secretary's desk, which was empty. There was also only one chair for visitors. This chair was behind some boxes and had a few envelopes on top of it. Since it was difficult to get to and was already fulfilling the function of a table or a desk extension, I decided to wait standing.

After waiting for 10 to 15 minutes to the sound of conversation coming from behind a closed door in the principal's office, a few students came in looking for the main office secretary. I was unable to tell them exactly where she was, although a safe assumption would be speaking with the principal, so they left with the task their teacher sent them down to fulfill unfinished. After another 15 minutes, these same students returned. At this point, I had worked my way to the chair and moved the envelopes to atop the boxes so I could sit. I once again told the students the secretary had not come

back and they left again. Finally, after waiting a little over a half hour, the secretary emerged from the principal's office. She closed the door and sat behind her desk and told me that the Ms. Rose would be right with me. This led me to assume that Ms. Rose was aware I was waiting and instead prioritized the lively personal conversation she was having with her secretary.

Indeed, when Ms. Rose did call me into her office, which was also small and primarily decorated by a desk, two chairs, and a bookcase that held pictures and books, she immediately shared with me that her and her husband had purchased a dog the night before. She shared stories about picking the dog out and the ride home as well as a few complications they had when they got home. After recapping the events of the previous evening, Ms. Rose told me that she felt she was too "scattered" to follow up with our planned interview and that she needed to reschedule. We rescheduled and about a month later we were able to complete the interview.

On both occasions when I met Ms. Rose, she presented herself as a very social woman who thrived on non-linear conversation. It was clear that she took care with her physical appearance. In the beginning of our second appointment, Ms. Rose apologized for having to reschedule and quickly filled me in on the progress of her new pet. She also shared that she was fairly new to administration. She assumed her current position a year after finishing her masters degree in educational administration. She had just completed her second year. She did not have experience as an assistant principal and she felt she was hired due to the small size of the school as well as her focus on literacy.

Ms. Rose shared that she was happy with her job because she had “more control” as a principal when compared to her teaching position. When she described the role of the principal, Ms. Rose noted it was more than just management and cited curriculum development as being a top priority. She qualified her definition of success as being when “the kids and the teachers see me as more than the principal and see me as a person who is trying to make sure everyone feels safe and makes sure the kids are happy and have a well rounded education.” Ms. Rose described success for her students as encompassing both mental and physical health as well as having an element of “follow through” in their life with the lessons that they were taught in school. When asked what this follow through would look like, Ms. Rose noted it would mean the students grew up “to be stable and have a job and a family and a home.”

When asked about her relationship with students, Ms. Rose noted she “gets along with most of them although there are a few discipline problems.” However, Ms. Rose notes more difficulties in her relationship with teachers and parents. She explains,

“The first year I came here the union representative was in my school and she seemed focused on complaining and filling grievances for everything that I did. Towards the end of the year I started to realize that it wasn’t me and that she would be doing this to anyone in my position so I just decided to be myself. After a while things have gotten better with the teachers because I think they started to see who I was instead of who I was being made out to be.”

Ms. Rose also noted her relationship with parents is moving in a more positive direction. She attributes the parents getting to know her better as the reasoning behind this shift but quickly added, “There are always going to be parents that I don’t get along with. That’s just part of this job.”

Ms. Rose does not count articulation with the high school her students attend as part of her job. When asked about vertical articulation, Ms. Rose referred to this as “something my superintendent would take care of.” Indeed, when asked about her students' achievement at the high school level, Ms. Rose noted, “That might be something the middle school principal would know about but I don’t know.” She extrapolated that about 80% of her students graduate high school. When asked how many students go onto postsecondary education after high school graduation, Ms. Rose was unable to answer specifically or give a range.

When presented with scenarios that posed ethical dilemmas, Ms. Rose relied on the ethic of justice as her primary problem-solving lens. In response to a scenario involving a student who had been repeatedly truant, Ms. Rose first noted she would delegate the responsibility of handling the situation to the guidance counselor because that would “be more something she would be responsible for”. She then referenced the school and state policy to establish the steps she would expect the guidance counselor to follow.

Principal 7: Mr. Rowan and Pear Tree School (Suburban)

While traveling to Pear Tree School, I drive down two lane highways that passed small clusters of stores that offered services ranging from laundry to liquor. At a major intersection, I turned off the main roads and onto smaller ones. Pear Tree School was located approximately 2 miles from the major intersection and was tucked away in the neighborhood it serves. While driving down the residential streets to the school, I noticed that the neighborhood appeared to be well established and was most likely two or more

generations old. Some of the small ranch style single homes that made up the neighborhood were well cared for and others clearly were not. As I approached the school and finished with my drive through the neighborhood, I was struck with how often I noticed "For Sale" signs on front lawns.

The school was a small one-story brick building surrounded by large trees. There was very little parking available so I had to park in front of the homes next to the school and walk. Once I reached the front doors I realized they were locked. To gain entrance, I pressed a buzzer and one of the two main office secretaries opened the door from her desk. The office was immediately in front of me as I walked through the doors and into the main lobby. Due to it being summer, the school was being painted and the hallways were covered with drop clothes and lined with men and buckets of paint.

Once inside the office, which was sealed behind floor to ceiling glass windows and doors, I was asked how I may be helped. After I introduced myself and my purpose, the secretary, who was very friendly, immediately paged Mr. Rowan. Within moments a young and athletic looking gentleman wearing a polo t-shirt and khakis emerged from the back and invited me into his office. Mr. Rowan's office was large with a wall of windows looking out onto the surrounding community. He had a large desk and conference table as well as a bookshelf that displayed books and pictures of his young family.

Mr. Rowan was very talkative and without prompting filled me in on his day's activities. He seemed to relish having someone to share complaints with; although it seemed that he enjoyed sharing in the act of complaining more than actually being annoyed or bothered by the situations that prompted the complaints. He had a quick laugh that he would often add to the end of his sentences. He seemed to be truly amused by

himself. Mr. Rowan had been in his current position for two years and had been an assistant principal for three years prior. He completed his masters in educational administration only a few years after completing his undergraduate degree as a middle school science teacher.

Mr. Rowan reports being “happy” in his current position but quickly added, “I don’t think I’ll retire from this job or anything but for now it works.” When asked about the importance of the principal, Mr. Rowan replied, “It’s not too important. I help set the tone and move the staff in the right direction but I don’t think you need to be a genius to do this job.” Mr. Rowan noted that his definition of success was “money and title” and that success for his students means, “They are better people by the end of the year, personally and academically.”

Mr. Rowan felt relationship building was his strongest attribute. When asked to describe his relationship with students and parents he quickly responded with superlative positives. However, when asked about his relationship with teachers, Mr. Rowan reported difficulties noting some teachers have resented that he will “call teachers out and I’ll do it loudly too so they know that I’m not going to just hush-hush their mistakes.”

Mr. Rowan also reported a weak relationship with the administrators of the high school his students attend. To summarize his perspective of his relationship with the high school administrators, Mr. Rowan framed his understanding through competitive terms noting, “I don’t really know what’s going on in the other schools. I know they probably get more resources than I do.” When Mr. Rowan was asked about his student’s success rates at the high school he replied, “I don’t know”. When he was asked to report on the

number of his students that pursue secondary education after high school he also reported “I don’t have that information, maybe somebody does but I don’t.”

When presented with ethical dilemmas, Mr. Rowan utilized an ethic of justice lens. His resolution to a scenario in which a student was consistently late was primarily focused on informing the parent of their legal responsibilities to “get their kids to school on time”. Mr. Rowan mirrored his dominant ethical framework in his resolution to the second dilemma that was presented to him. This dilemma included choosing between establishing a work study program or an honors program at the high school. Mr. Rowan’s response to this scenario centered on needing to fulfill high school graduation rates for the state of New Jersey. With this focus, Mr. Rowan noted that a work study program would better help the school district improve drop out rates.

Principal 8: Ms. Iris and Peach Tree School (Suburban)

Although they are in separate school districts, Peach Tree School was located only a couple miles from Pear Tree School. The drive to Peach Tree mirrored my drive to Pear Tree. I drove down the same two lane highway and past the same stores that were scattered in small clusters along the road. I also turned at the same intersection that I turned at to get to Pear Tree School. Peach Tree School differed from Pear Tree in that it was closer to the intersection and was not tucked within the neighborhood that it serviced. Instead there was only a small road that led from the main road to the school, which was not large enough to hold any homes on either side, and dead-ended in the school parking lot.

Along the front of Peach Tree School was the most beautiful landscaping of all the schools I visited. It was clear someone cared about one's first impression of this school. The front doors of the school were locked and required pressing a button to inform the secretary I was waiting, at which time she unlocked the door from her desk and I entered the school. On the way to the office, which was encased with large glass windows, I passed a large and colorful media center that was well stocked with not only books but also with a large number of computers. I was also able to observe a class moving about the hallway. The class was quite well behaved as they walked about the school.

Once I entered the large main office the secretary greeted me and offered me a seat on the couch situated on the outside of a wooden shelf that appeared to be utilized as a barrier. After only a few minutes wait the principal opened the door of her office and asked me to come in and have a seat. Ms. Iris's office was large and organized with only small piles on her desk and a small bookcase next to a conference table. Ms. Iris was small in stature and cheery. She immediately began the conversation by asking how my day as well as how my studies were going. She seemed eager to learn more about my objectives and displayed a true curiosity about what a doctorate program in educational administration entails. She shared with me that she had completed her graduate degree in educational administration a few years ago and was considering going back for her doctorate but was unsure about being able to balance the work load and her other responsibilities.

Ms. Iris had only been in her current position for a year and was a supervisor of curriculum for two years prior to accepting her present job. She reported being happy in her position but that, “It can be pretty overwhelming because when I came into this position things were pretty much a mess. The prior administration was not kept on for specific reasons and those reasons became even more obvious once I started going through things.” Ms. Iris referenced the incompetence of the previous administration again when she was asked about the importance of the principal. She replied to the question by saying,

“People seem to want to find one person or persons that they can hold up as the most important people in a school. Some say its principals and others say its teachers and so on. I don’t know that one is really all that much more important than the other. I think maybe depending on the situation and the specifics of the school one may have more impact than the others at any given time but I think in a fully functioning school there should be a shared power. For example, the last few years here from what I hear teachers needed to take care of a lot of things that the teachers in my previous district would never be asked to do. Now I think there has been a big change in the last year and I have started to have more impact in shaping the direction of where we are going. I don’t think that a principal should have all the power in a school but I definitely think that you need a leader to steer the direction or it can get pretty off course, at least it did here.”

When asked about her definition of success, Ms. Iris reported her focus was to make teachers successful so in turn they could make students successful. She cited test scores as well as being “socially and emotionally well adjusted” as markers of student success. Ms. Iris described her relationship with the students as being positive and based on respect. She also noted she has “a very nice relationship with the parents”. She credits an open door policy as well as honest communication for her positive relationship with

parents. Ms. Iris reports struggles with teachers and cited the stark differences between her style and that of the previous administration as having some fault.

When asked about the articulation with the high school her students attend, Ms. Iris noted opportunities for meeting but quickly pointed out the urgent need to focus on “cleaning up the mess here” before she felt she could take anything more on. Her response to an inquiry concerning the number of her students who pursue post secondary education was more anecdotal than specific. She noted,

“I really don’t know how many students go onto high school but I wouldn’t guess too many. I just think that the students here really don’t have any role models, no one they can look up to so they just wait until they can drop out or go into a trade like their fathers and that’s all they really ever think is possible.”

When directly asked, Ms. Iris did note that school and specifically teachers or administrators could be the role models she cited as lacking. However, she quickly noted that with the increasing demands from the state it is very difficult to put programs like job fairs or college days in place.

Ms. Iris utilized the ethical framework of community in her assessment of the ethical dilemmas presented to her. In reaching a resolution for a chronically late student, Ms. Iris highlighted the importance of understanding the needs and limitations of the community that her school served. In the second scenario, she referenced the need to assess what would benefit the community more when determining whether to create a work study or college prep honors program at the high school.

Principal 9: Ms. Jackie and JFK School (Urban)

JFK school sits at the end of a dead-end, which is located off of a busy two lane road that was crowded by rundown stores on either side. The small road that the school was located on was poorly marked and very difficult to find from the main road. I had great difficulty finding the turn but was able to stop and ask one of the many police officers I saw parked in the parking lots of the surrounding stores. After passing through a few of the many lights that littered the main road, I was able to find and turn down the street that the school sat on.

I had to drive for a few moments down the dead end street before I reached the school. The school was large and was a grey color that was only interrupted by the occasional string of windows, which signified a classroom. The spacious grounds were ill-kept and the cages for the baseball field were partly torn down. There was an overpowering overhang that served to protect those waiting in front of doors from the weather. When I reached the doors they were all locked. I pressed the intercom a few times before someone responded.

Once inside the doors, the school felt grand and open. The hallways were wide and brightly lit. There were two trophy cases lining the front lobby and bright posters decorating the walls. The main office was just off the lobby. The office was also spacious and held two secretaries, neither of which looked up to greet me when I entered the office. After waiting a few minutes one of the secretaries curtly asked my purpose for being there. She then instructed me to take a seat while she notified Ms. Jackie.

Ms. Jackie came from her office in the back of the main office after a short while. She was a round faced, pleasant looking woman who had a wide smile. As soon as she made eye contact with me she stopped and signaled me with a large gesture to follow her back to her office. Ms. Jackie's office was only decorated with the bare essentials. Her style of décor mirrored her style in our interview, which was one in which she gave short and direct answers. There were numerous occasions throughout the interview that Ms. Jackie checked to reaffirm the confidentiality of our interview. In fact, during some answers, Ms. Jackie would lean closer to me and speak very softly, as if she was telling me a secret.

Ms. Jackie had been in her current post for two years but does not plan on staying for much longer. Indeed, she does not plan on staying in the field of educational administration for much longer. Her aspirations range from a professorship to working in a private school or nonprofit setting. She also considers going back to school in a full-time capacity to earn her doctorate degree. She reported she had not done this yet because she is unsure what subject area she wants to focus on.

Ms. Jackie was a teacher in a charter school in New York prior to earning her masters in educational administration and felt the switch from a charter school to a large urban public school was "drastic". When asked about the importance of a principal, Ms. Jackie responded, "Well, I think the role is extremely important. You have that saying that the fish rots from the head down. If a school is working properly you really need to look at the principal and see that they are the educational leader."

Ms. Jackie defines success for herself as, “Right now, in this role, to be part manager and part instructional leader and to make sure the kids are safe. In the long run I would just like to know that I have helped kids.” Student success was defined by Ms. Jackie as, “Students making great strides and being able to read and having inquisitive students and I believe the test scores give some indication as to how the educational environment is functioning but we also need to look at the student and make sure they are becoming a whole person.”

Ms. Jackie describes her relationship with the community as “good” but quickly adds, “I wish they would become more involved.” She views her relationship with the students as “great” and credits that with the students being “very young so they still look up to the principal.” Ms. Jackie feels her relationship with the teachers has been “a little rough”. She believes this is due to her “innovations” as a principal and that the staff, “have been very resistant and do not see someone shaking up the status quo as a good thing.”

When Ms. Jackie was asked about her relationship with the high school administrators she noted she does not communicate with them and rated the overall articulation as being “not good at all”. She reported that right now she has “no idea” how her students do in high school. She did report a desire to have more communication to be able to track her students' success. However, when asked to give examples of what the administrators were doing to increase articulation she was unable to give any. When asked what percentage of her students go on to post secondary education, Ms. Jackie did not know but offered to give me the contact information of someone in central office that would have those figures.

When confronted with ethical dilemmas, Ms. Jackie relied on the ethic of community to inform her decision-making. For example, when asked about a student who has arrived consistently late, she immediately related the situation back to her school and reported she has had to deal with this specific issue herself. Her experience led her to view the scenario I presented her with as an issue with the community not “prioritizing their kid’s education the way they need to be so I would want to look at how we can start making them see that it is really important to get their kids here on time.”

Principal 10: Ms. Coretta and MLK School (Urban)

MLK School was a sprawling one story brick building. The grounds surrounding the building were freshly cut. There were numerous sports fields around the school as well as two playgrounds that were easily visible from the parking lot. To get to school, I had to drive down a major route that holds big box stores, strip malls, gas stations, and fast food restaurants. The road was very crowded and seemed to be a commuter’s roadway. I turned at a light onto a smaller road and then quickly onto a residential road to get to the school. The school sat at the end of a road that held a few small houses and one large townhouse complex. On my drive down this road, I saw numerous children wearing catholic school uniforms standing outside the townhouse complex and seemingly waiting for busing to a private school.

The front doors of the school were locked. After pressing an intercom system, the door was electronically unlocked and I was able to step into the front lobby of the school. The main office was immediately in front of me when I walked through the doors. However, there was only a small window in which I could speak with the secretary. As

soon as I walked up to the window I was asked to sign in and then the door to my right buzzed unlocked and I walked into the main office area. There were two small chairs against the wall that I sat down on while I waited.

Within moments, Ms. Coretta came out. She was a small, thin woman with salt and pepper hair to her shoulders. She walked to where I was sitting and held her hand out to greet me. After we finished our introductions she walked me back to her office. Her office was large in size and very bright, with sunlight streaming through the open windows that lined her wall and gave a view of the parking lot. The office held her desk with a large bookcase behind it, and two chairs facing the desk. The bookcase held family photos, plants, and books. Her desk was very well organized with only a few small piles of work and some personal pictures sitting atop it.

Ms. Coretta had a very welcoming smile and made personal conversation prior to our interview. She was very interested in my interests and seemed to want to know more about me before she shared information about herself. Her open and unassuming manner was present throughout the meeting. She clearly thought before she spoke and gave her answers in a very soft spoken voice. Ms Coretta was a teacher for decades before she earned her masters in educational administration and credits, “feeling like my time in the classroom was done” as being the impetus for her to pursue an administrative post. Ms. Coretta had been in her current position for only one year. She had five years experience in administration, two of which were in this district, prior to moving into her present post.

Ms. Coretta reported she is “absolutely” happy in her current post and planned to retire from the position. She feels she is “valued” but that the role of the principal is not extremely important. She noted, “If it is a good school it should be able to run itself.” Her

definition of personal success included the “staff being successful” and the school as a whole being able to “make those baby steps we set out to.” She viewed students' success as the students, “feeling safe and loved because then the academic part follows.”

Ms. Coretta describes her relationship with the students as, “wonderful, absolutely wonderful”. Ms. Coretta feels she “works with the parents overall pretty well I would say”. However, when asked about her relationship with teachers, Ms. Coretta explains,

“There is a group of veteran staff that is pretty challenging. They were very close with the previous principal and are having a hard time adjusting to how I do things. I would say that I get along well with a lot of teachers but these challenging teachers are veterans and have a certain level of leadership among the staff so it has been very difficult to try to work with them.”

When asked about her relationship with the high school administrators, Ms. Coretta replied, “I have very little if any contact with them.” Although there was clearly very limited vertical articulation, Ms. Coretta was able to speak in generalities about the success rate of her students after graduation. She credited Board meeting minutes for her knowledge that, “The district has really started trying to increase students who go on to two year colleges. At the elementary level I don’t pay much attention to it but I know it’s something they’re paying attention to at the higher levels.”

In evaluating resolutions for ethical dilemmas, Ms. Coretta utilized an ethic of justice approach. When asked about deciding between increasing college prep courses or work study courses for high school students, she very diplomatically resolved to equally divide the funding up between both groups “to see money going into both directions so it’s fair for everyone”. When asked about a chronically late student, Ms. Coretta outlined which staff member would be responsible for handling the situation and how the situation should be handled per district code and state law.

Principal 11: Ms. Eleanor and FDR School (Urban)

FDR School is a large brick building that sits tucked within the neighborhood it services. The neighborhood is made up of very small ranch style homes. For the most part, these homes appeared to be in disrepair. The yards were overgrown and poorly cared for with a few having old decrepit vehicles parked along the yard to the side of the home. FDR School itself presented as cared for but only to the extent that was necessary. The grass was cut but no shrubbery or trees were planted around the school. From the front, the school was vacant of observable sport fields and playgrounds, leaving the parking lot to be the only prominent feature.

The front doors were centered on the building but little else besides their positioning signified the entrance. The doors were locked and required the use of an intercom. Before the doors were opened for me I had to explain the purpose of my visit after which I was instructed to report directly to the office. Due to the summer schedule, the school was undergoing maintenance and the daily appearance of the interior was altered. I found my way to the main office, which was just around the corner from the lobby. Within the office sat two secretaries, both busily working at their desks and a woman standing between them. As soon as I entered the woman who was standing introduced herself to me as Ms. Eleanor and escorted me back to her office.

Ms. Eleanor was a middle aged tall woman who had a strong presence and appeared to be very confident. Her office looked very lived-in and housed her desk, a large conference table, and a few bookshelves. Her walls were covered with framed childrens art as well as inspirational posters. Ms. Eleanor was very forthcoming and talkative and throughout the interview would often share very personal details of her life.

She reported she had been in her current post for five years and also served for six years partly as an assistant principal immediately after completing her masters in educational administration and partly as a principal in another district.

She reported being “very satisfied” professionally but blamed the demand of the job on her lack of personal happiness. She viewed the job of a principal as being “very important” and explained, “I work hard everyday because I think schools need leadership. I would hate to think it was not that important.” Ms. Eleanor defined success for herself as whether or not the students were “excited to come to school everyday and wanting to learn”. When asked what would qualify success for her students, Ms. Eleanor explained, “If they are happy and functioning parents and employees and friends and neighbors one day.”

Ms. Eleanor described her relationship with the students as “fantastic” and feels she has a “good working relationship” with the parents. She credits her open door policy for changing the trajectory of her relationship with the teachers. She perceived her relationship as “difficult and confrontational” with some of the teachers when she first arrived. She noted numerous grievances being filed through the union. However, through learning individual personalities and which teachers she is “never going to be able to make happy”, Ms. Eleanor believed she was able to start changing the narrative about her that was being share among the staff from a mostly negative opinion to a “pretty positive” opinion.

Ms. Eleanor feels she has a “positive” but very minimal relationship with the high school principal but “wouldn’t be able to tell you what the assistant principals even look like”. When asked about the paths her students take after elementary school or more

specifically how many go onto post secondary education, Ms. Eleanor explained, “I don’t really have that information. I can certainly guess that we have higher numbers going to two year colleges than four year schools but I don’t know any specifics.” Ms. Eleanor noted that she was unable to keep up with this information and that, “It’s really someone in central office who would be able to track that information not a building level person.”

In examining and resolving ethical dilemmas, Ms. Eleanor relied on the ethic of care. When responding to a situation about a repeatedly late students, Ms. Eleanor explained, “My approach is always that I want to help the student and so I would reach out to the parents and see what we could do together to try to make sure we are focused on helping the student do as well as she can.” When she was asked to prioritize funds for either college prep or work study courses she explained, “I think we would need to assess the students and determine what their individual needs are and go with that program.”

Principal 12: Dr. Abraham and Lincoln School (Urban)

On my drive to Lincoln School, my route took me on a major highway whose exit fed directly onto the street the school was located on. The street was busy and full of small stores on either side. Some of the stores that were located closest to the school included a convenience store, a laundromat, and a liquor store. Lincoln School was a sprawling, cinderblock building. The parking lot was full of potholes and cracked cement with numerous tall streetlights placed throughout. The front of the building had no greenery, it was all cement. The front doors were marked by a walkway leading up to the building whereas the rest of the building was fenced off. After ringing the front bell, it took a few moments for someone to respond.

After explaining who I was and my purpose they opened the doors. The hallways of the school looked clean and well cared for. The main lobby had bulletin boards with safety information and inspirational posters filling them. The office was directly in front of the doors at the far end of the lobby. The main hub of the office was lined with filing cabinets and the secretary's desks, which were all blocked off by a partition. By the front door and in front of the partition was a line of chairs. I sat only momentarily in the chairs until Dr. Abraham came out of his office to greet me with a wave and invited me to follow him to his office.

We had to walk down a narrow hallway past numerous office doors to access Dr. Abraham's office, which was at the end of the hallway. Dr. Abraham had a large office that was rather dark with no windows. He had very little hanging on the wall. Instead, the office was decorated only with a long conference table, his desk, and the books that were held on the small bookshelf behind his desk. Dr. Abraham was a large man who had a booming voice and businesslike manner. Before we began our interview he very clearly outlined the amount of time he had available. He was very focused on the structure of the meeting and what exactly the questions would cover. After he felt he had a mastery of the situation, he appeared to relax and was forthcoming but direct throughout our conversation.

Dr. Abraham had been an administrator for four years. He started as an assistant principal in a private school for behaviorally challenged students and then moved into his current position two years ago. While he was serving as an assistant principal, Dr. Abraham completed his doctorate in educational administration in part because, "My friends and I from my masters program decided to do it together and I didn't want to back

out.” When asked about his level of happiness, Dr. Abraham explained, “The job is always changing and some years are better than others but overall it’s a great career.”

Dr. Abraham believes the role of the principal is very important and that primarily he is there to “guide the direction of the school” and “help people when they fall down so to speak”. Dr. Abraham used NCLB legislation, and specifically AYP, as an indicator of his personal success. He was much more holistic when speaking about students’ success highlighting emotional and social development as being as important as academic development. He credited his comprehensive view of students with, “My background with special education really taught me to look at the whole child.”

Dr. Abraham explained that the move from assistant principal to principal really helped his relationship with students and parents, which he describes as “very good”. He explained that as an assistant principal he was the disciplinarian and had to play a “bad cop” role; whereas now, he feels he is able to listen more and take on a more supportive, or “good cop” role. Although his relationship with parents and students has improved through the years, he feels that his relationship with teachers is very challenging. He explains,

“The union is very powerful in this district and more times than not teachers will challenge me just to make sure that they are keeping me in check. I don’t think they believe that I will be here very long, they do get a lot of turn over, so I think this is just what they have learned to do through the years as a protective measure. I am working on trying to get things settled better with the teachers but I think this may be one of those time can only heal situations.”

When asked about vertical articulation with the high school principal, Dr. Abraham qualified the communication as “not very good” and explained that he was “too busy putting out fires in my building on a daily basis” to focus on what was happening

with his students at the high school level. Dr. Abraham was unable to provide any information pertaining to how many of his students attend post secondary education after they graduate from high school. Instead he said, “I’m sure I could get that information but I don’t have it”.

Dr. Abraham’s approach to ethical dilemmas was grounded firmly in the ethic of justice. When asked about a chronically truant student, he asserted he “would want the guidance counselor and the truancy officer to look into the situation and inform me how they thought we should proceed. What I would do a lot of times I’ve seen situations like this is we’ve referred them to DYFS.” Dr. Abraham also utilized the ethic of justice in determining how to allocate funding for high school level courses. When asked what he would do, Dr. Abraham insisted,

“That really would not be my place as an elementary school administrator. Just with the way things are set up in this district I wouldn’t want to step on anyone’s toes by countering their authority or input, especially when it affects them more. I would just probably follow the lead of the high school principal and superintendent and make sure the Board knows I support them.”

Twelve Principals: Similarities and Differences

Each of these principals had distinct personal and professional experiences that ultimately informed very different leadership priorities, styles, and ethical frameworks. There were also similarities that emerged that allowed for the grouping of these unique individuals. In reviewing the coding of data, these distinct differences and similarities emerged as the data was examined through the constant comparative method.

Similarities

All of the principals interviewed reported being raised in a middle class family as well as qualified their current economic status as middle class. The principals uniformly noted that they either prioritized or would prioritize education for their children. All of the participants entered education to help children and they all entered through teaching in the classroom and eventually moved into administration. All the principals interviewed worked with an elementary school in the capacity of a school administrator, or more specifically, school principal.

Differences

The differences among the principals were numerous. The participants varied in age, gender and race (see figure 4.2). The schools the principals worked within also differed in size, demographic area, and percent of students who receive Title 1 funding (see Figure 4.1). The principals interviewed had very different family structures growing up and grew up in differing demographic areas. The participants' parents' level of education varied as did their own. The principals also had different career ambitions and years experience in education, and specifically educational administration.

The principals expressed different degrees of job satisfaction and provided varied explanations pertaining to the importance of the role of the principal. There were differing answers among the participants in reference to the quality of relationships established with students, teachers, and parents as well as differences in the levels of articulation with the high school their students attended. Principals also had differing perspectives pertaining to the degree of which their job consisted of facilitating upward

mobility for their students as well as whether they associated post secondary education with in part providing this upward mobility. The principals also expressed varied levels of investment and ownership of their students’ success after high school. A manifestation of this difference was established in the principal’s ability to track students’ success after high school as defined by their enrollment in post secondary education. Finally, the principals utilized differing ethical frameworks to problem solve. Please refer to Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 below for a visual guide to the consolidation of the similarities and differences of the answers given during the principal interviews.

Figure 4.3 Aggregation of Interview Data

<i>Principal</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Job Sat.</i>	<i>Perceived Import</i>	<i>Student Relation</i>	<i>Teacher Relation</i>	<i>Parent Relation</i>	<i>H.S Artic.</i>
Mika	Rural	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Amber	Rural	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Pearl	Rural	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Garnett	Rural	Strong	Strong	Strong	Average	Average	Poor
Lilly	Suburban	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Rose	Suburban	Strong	Average	Average	Average	Average	Poor
Rowan	Suburban	Average	Poor	Strong	Average	Strong	Poor
Iris	Suburban	Average	Strong	Strong	Poor	Strong	Poor
Jackie	Urban	Poor	Strong	Strong	Poor	Average	Poor
Coretta	Urban	Strong	Poor	Strong	Poor	Average	Poor
Eleanor	Urban	Poor	Strong	Strong	Poor	Strong	Poor
Abraham	Urban	Average	Strong	Strong	Poor	Strong	Poor

Figure 4.4 Degree of Priority on Upward Mobility for Students and Ethical Frameworks Utilized

<i>Principal</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Job include providing upper mobility</i>	<i>Upper mobility assoc. w/post sec. ed.</i>	<i>Ability to Track</i>	<i>Reported % of students who attend post secondary ed.</i>	<i>Ethical Paradigms Utilized</i>
Mika	Rural	Yes	Yes	Strong	85%	Care and Community
Amber	Rural	Yes	Yes	Strong	85%	Care and Community
Pearl	Rural	Yes	Yes	Strong	85%	Critique, Care, and Community
Garnett	Rural	No	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Justice
Lilly	Suburban	Yes	Yes	Strong	90%	Care and Community
Rose	Suburban	No	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Justice
Rowan	Suburban	No	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Justice
Iris	Suburban	Yes	Yes	Poor	Doesn't know	Community
Jackie	Urban	No	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Community
Coretta	Urban	No	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Justice
Eleanor	Urban	Yes	No	Poor	Doesn't know	Care
Abraham	Urban	Yes	Yes	Poor	30-40%	Justice

Findings of Study

Although there were a great number of differences among the participants, the categorization of data through the use of the constant comparative method allowed for patterns of difference to emerge. In effect, these patterns led to the differentiation of principals into categories themselves. Notably, for the purposes of this study, the primary contributor to the categorization of each principal was the degree to which a principal associated their job with providing upward social mobility for their students. Through

this lens, the three categories that emerged were Unaware Reproducers, Aware Reproducers, and Proactive Challengers.

Principals that fell within the Unaware Reproducers category were seen as primarily focused on maintaining the status quo within their school districts; specifically, the high degree of social reproduction found in poor schools. Those principals that fell within the Aware Reproducer category described their daily activities and attitudes as having a degree of awareness that social reproduction existed within the communities where they worked and that as educational leaders they had the power to challenge it. However, the Aware Reproducer principals exhibited dissonance between their cognitive understanding of their potential role in challenging social reproduction and their daily actions and priorities. This is to say, they expressed the importance of providing opportunities for upward social mobility for their students but fell short in their ability to describe how they operationalize actualizing those opportunities. Finally, the principals classified under the umbrella of Proactive Challenger were placed within this category because they both expressed and acted upon an understanding of their power to facilitate opportunities for upward social mobility for their students. The working definition of each category as it relates to this study and the specific interview questions asked will be explored below.

The category that each principal fell within became apparent when examining their answers regarding the interview question pertaining to facilitating upward mobility for their students. Seven of the twelve principals interviewed viewed their role as partially including facilitating opportunities for upward social mobility for their students. Therefore, these seven principals were classified under the Aware Reproducer category;

whereas, the five principals who did not see their role as providing upward mobility for their students were classified under the Unaware Reproducers category.

Next, the Aware Reproducer category was further examined to differentiate between principals who theoretically believed in or spoke of facilitating upward social mobility for their students versus those principals who reported proactively working towards achieving such opportunity for their students. Some examples of the data analyzed to determine which principals proactively worked toward providing upward mobility for their students included, but was not limited to, the principals understanding that upward social mobility is largely affected by a student's degree of post secondary education as well as the principal's investment in being able to track student trajectory.

Only six of the seven principals in the Aware Reproducer category associated post secondary education with facilitating upward mobility. Moreover, when asked about specific personal knowledge regarding post secondary education for their students, only four of the seven Aware Reproducer principals were able to concretely explain how they proactively pursued ensuring their students had access to post secondary educational opportunity and specifically quantify how many of their students go on to post secondary education. Therefore, another category was established for these four principals: the Proactive Challengers. Figure 4.5 shows a visual representation of the three categories through the questions discussed above as well as the prominent shared characteristics that emerged within each category, which will be discussed in further detail throughout this chapter.

Figure 4.5 Principal Categories

<i>Category</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Use of Ethical Paradigm(s)</i>	<i>Consistent Positive Relationships with teachers, students, parents, and high school administrators</i>
Proactive Challengers	Doctorate	Use of multiple ethical frameworks	Reported positive relationships with all stakeholder
Aware Reproducers	Mostly Masters	Use of only one ethical framework	Reported mostly positive relationships with consistent difficulty with teacher relationships and vertical articulation
Unaware Reproducers	Only Masters	Almost uniformly used only the ethic of justice	Reported relational difficulty with all stakeholders with no clear pattern emerging other than uniform weakness with vertical articulation

Figure 4.6 provides a visual representation of each category as well as the corresponding principals that fell within the category.

Figure 4.6 Principals in Each Category

<i>Category</i>	<i>Principals</i>
Proactive Challengers	Dr. Mika, Dr. Amber, Dr. Pearl, and Dr. Lilly
Aware Reproducers	Ms. Iris, Ms. Eleanor, and Dr. Abraham
Unaware Reproducers	Mr. Garnett, Ms. Rose, Mr. Rowan, Ms. Jackie, and Ms. Coretta

Category Analysis

The following section will explore why each principal fell within one of the three overarching categories used to classify the subjects involved in this study. Specifically, the personal and professional factors that are associated with each principal, within each category, will be analyzed in an effort to determine patterns of intra-category variables that are present. Once the individual data for each principal is examined, the patterns that

emerged among the principals within a category will be discussed in an effort to determine the strongest contributors, or predictors, of a principal's investment, or lack thereof, in challenging social reproduction in the poor communities in which they work.

The Proactive Challengers

Dr. Mika, Dr. Amber, Dr. Pearl, and Dr. Lilly, the four out of twelve principals who noted the importance of facilitating upward social mobility, were able to cite proactive involvement in tracking their student's success after they leave elementary school. For this study, examples of proactive involvement with students after they graduated from elementary school that were specifically questioned were the level of articulation with the high school principals, the degree to which the principals track the success rates of students in high school, and active knowledge of the percentages of their students who pursue post secondary education after graduation. After further analysis of the data, it became apparent that these four principals shared numerous other perspectives and experiences as well.

The data gathered on these four principals highlighted a shared approach to ethical dilemmas. This is to say, these principals accessed similar ethical frameworks when determining how to resolve ethically complicated scenarios. Although there were other patterns present in the overall data, namely five principals relying solely on the ethic of justice, the complexity and nuance of the combination of ethical frameworks employed by the four Proactive Challenger principals included a level of sophistication that made their grouping more distinctive than the simple uni-dimensional ethical grouping of those who primarily accessed the ethic of justice.

A possible factor that contributed to the complex ethical consideration of the four Proactive Challenger principals is their level of education. Five out of the twelve principals interviewed had earned their doctorate degree. Four out of the five of these principals fell within the Proactive Challenger category. The fifth principal, Dr. Abraham, varied from the Proactive Challenger principals in that he earned his doctorate degree over ten years ago as compared to the four Proactive Challenger principals who had completed their terminal degree within the past decade. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume a difference in focus and theory delivered in Dr. Abraham's doctorate program versus the program of the four Proactive Challenger principals. Some considerations of what those differences may have been include the focus on ethics added to the ISSLC standards in 1996 (ethic of the profession), NCLB legislation, which draws significant attention to the achievement gap and needing to focus on the needs of each student (ethics of critique and care), as well as the importance of involving the community and parents (ethic of community).

As discussed in the literature review, when a leader is able to integrate and utilize multiple ethical frameworks in their practice, they are much more likely to engage in moral leadership. Therefore, there is a suggested association between level of education, the nuanced use of complex ethical paradigms, and moral educational leadership. However, it is clear that not all educational administrators who have earned their doctorate engage in moral educational leadership. With this in mind, a causal relationship between education level and a principal's likelihood of engaging in moral leadership can not be established or assumed. This suggests additional variables, either external such as school setting and structure, or internal such as intrinsic motivation and focus. It's

suggested that these variables contribute to determining the level and degree to which a principal utilizes moral leadership. For the purposes of this data analysis, moral educational leadership was in part determined through the degree to which the principal reported prioritizing providing upward social mobility for through students, both in theory and action.

As with all moral endeavors, the ethical frameworks utilized are very personal and interwoven with individual opinions and priorities. Therefore, it is important to highlight what further categories of data the four Proactive Challenger principals shared to establish what additional factors contributed to their increased likelihood to engage in moral leadership. Throughout further analysis, the data showed all four of these principals demonstrated an enhanced ability to consistently establish positive relationships across numerous settings.

Many of the twelve principals interviewed reported positive relationships with at least two of the four groups of stakeholders that were highlighted in the interview: students, teachers, parents, and administrators of the high school their students attend. However, only Dr. Mika, Dr. Amber, Dr. Pearl, and Dr. Lilly reported consistently positive relationships with all the stakeholders discussed during the interview. This common answer pattern illuminates the commitment of these four principals to marrying their personal and professional priorities and perspectives with their daily practice. The ability to act in alignment with what ones says and espouses to believe will for the purposes of this study be referred to as integration. This is to say, all of the principals interviewed acknowledged the importance of relationships and relationship building in establishing a successful school. However, only the four Proactive Challenger principals

discussed above described consistently aligning their understanding of the importance of positive relationship building with their daily practice. Again, this can arguably be referred to as integration. With the factors discussed earlier in mind, Figure 4.7 was generated to provide a visual guide to the common themes that emerged from this study as being shared among principals who engage in moral educational leadership.

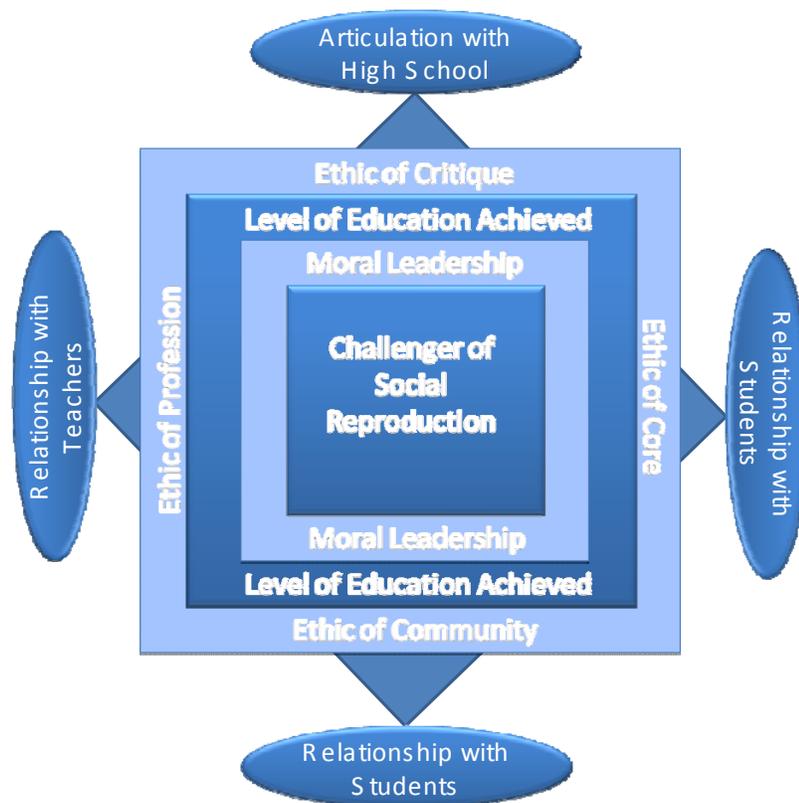
Figure 4.7 Composition of Moral Educational Leadership



As Figure 4.7 shows, the evidence from this study suggests that an understanding of the multiple ethical paradigms is closely related to the level of education attained. Also, integration between a principal's espoused beliefs and their daily practice leads to a much higher likelihood of an educational leader describing engagement in moral leadership.

To move the data analysis from a composition of variables which increase the likelihood for moral educational leadership (Figure 4.7) to a more operationalized, action oriented analysis of what challenging social reproduction includes for educational leaders (Figure 4.8), one must consider specific elements of daily practice. Further evidence of this study linked the importance of the principal's practice to not only have integration and an informed, nuanced ethical practice, but also include positive relationship building with all stakeholders. This positive relationship building includes, but is not limited to, focusing on students, teachers, parents, and other educational administrators, namely communication and vertical articulation with the high school principals.

Figure 4.8 Composition and Practices of Principals Who Challenge Social Reproduction



As Figure 4.8 illustrates, and as the research has argued, there are many shared characteristics between moral leadership and principals who view their role as facilitators of upward social mobility for their students. Specifically, an understanding of the complexity and nuance of the multiple ethical paradigms, which the data from this study associates with level of education attained. Furthermore, the principal must practice utilizing integration. This is to say, they must marry their theoretical understanding or belief in granting upward social opportunity for their student with the focus and the priority of their daily practice. Daily practices that are associated with focusing on providing upward mobility for students were described in this study as consistent positive relationship building with teachers, parents, and students as well as establishing a strong working relationship with the administration of the high school their students attend.

An analysis of the data shows that the four Proactive Challenger principals were invested in proactively establishing positive relationships with all stakeholders. It was such a priority to all of the Proactive Challenger principals to be able to establish and grow positive relationships with teachers, students, parents, and other administrators that they talked of actively pursuing their current positions partially based on this potential. For example, Dr. Mika cited, “Being able to really become an important part of this community” as being a motivating factor for choosing his current position. Dr. Pearl noted, “One of the reasons I will retire out of this position is that I have finally found a school in which I can control my own destiny and determine my own connections. This was something I had to look for for a very long time.” Finally, Dr. Lilly summarizes the importance of being able to form relationships in determining whether she accepted her current position when she explained,

“We have really focused on building positive relationships in this district, across the board not just focused on vertical articulation. I don’t think I would have pursued this position if building investment and participation in excellence wasn’t such a district focus. I can see how other district administrators get stuck in their job description and don’t feel empowered to reach out. That just isn’t the case in this school district and that’s a big part of why I want to grow my career here.”

It is important to note the shared personal importance and focus the Proactive Challenger principals placed on relationship forming. The focus of relationship building was so important that it was reported to be a threshold test for job acceptance. This is notable because when examining shared district variables the prominence of rural schools in the Proactive Challenger category is highlighted, three out of the four principals worked in rural districts and one in a suburban district. However, the demographic location of the schools appears to be less predictive than the priorities of the principals. This is to say, school districts that allow principals to proactively establish and engage in relationship building were determined by the majority of the Proactive Challenger principals to be smaller, rural schools, as is evident in the jobs they pursued.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the desire to establish positive relationships with all stakeholders was reportedly present before the principals entered their current posts. Therefore, the principal’s personal and professional priority on relationship building was much more predictive in determining the likelihood of positive relationship building than the demographic location of the school. Another shared aspect of professional development, beyond the education level noted previously, that may have played a role in determining the type of relationships each principal established, and in effect the degree to which they engaged in moral leadership, is that the two principals with the most experience (See Figure 4.2) fell within the Proactive Challenger category.

In summary, when all of the factors previously discussed align (see Figure 4.8), as the analysis of the data highlights they did for Dr. Mika, Dr. Amber, Dr. Pearl, and Dr. Lilly, there is a higher likelihood the principals will be able to report on student trajectory and success rates. Indeed, out of the twelve principals interviewed, the four principals identified as being Proactive Challengers were the only principals in this study who were able to report knowledge about their students success at the high school level as well as their pursuit of postsecondary education. This engagement with their students' academic trajectory demonstrates a long term investment in student success, which can arguably be described in part as being invested in facilitating upward social mobility. Overall, Figure 4.8 takes all the factors explored in this section into consideration and provides a visual representation of the variables that contribute to a principal becoming a facilitator of upward social mobility for their students.

The Aware Reproducers

As was found with the Proactive Challengers, the three Aware Reproducer principals reported facilitating upward social mobility as an important aspect of their job. These principals are Ms. Iris, Ms. Eleanor, and Dr. Abraham. However, unlike the four Proactive Challenger principals, but like the five Unaware Reproducer principals, the Aware Reproducer principals were unable to cite any specific actions or policies they employed in their practice to proactively bring about the opportunity for upward social mobility (see Figure 4.4). As was explored previously, for the purposes of this paper, the

disconnect between espoused beliefs and evidence of everyday practice will be referred to as a lack of integration.

As the data analysis highlighted with the Proactive Challengers, it is possible that multiple variables contributed to the follow through, or lack thereof, on the Aware Reproducer principals' communicated priority of challenging social reproduction in their communities. For example, unlike the Proactive Challengers, the majority of the Aware Reproducer principals did not have their doctorate degrees. Two of the three principals that fell within the Aware Reproducer category had completed their masters in educational administration but not their doctorate. Those principals were Ms. Iris and Ms. Eleanor. Dr. Abraham, the third and final Aware Reproducer principal, did complete his doctorate. Notably, as discussed earlier, this was done over a decade before this study was conducted; whereas, the principals who fell within the Proactive Challenger category had completed their doctorate within the past decade. This is notable in that there is a high likelihood that within the past ten years the content of educational leadership doctorate programs has changed significantly, which may explain the difference in practice between Dr. Abraham and the Proactive Challenger principals.

One of the important changes in educational leadership that has occurred in the past decade is the shift towards a stronger focus on the multiple ethical paradigms in educational administration. A weak awareness of the multiple ethical paradigms was apparent among the three Aware Reproducer principals as well as the five Unaware Reproducer principals. The three principals who fell within the Aware Reproducer category described utilizing only one ethical paradigm in their problem solving versus the Proactive Challengers who utilized multiple ethical paradigms. The paradigms utilized by

Ms. Iris, Ms. Eleanor, and Dr. Abraham were the ethic of community, care, and justice, respectively (see Figure 4.4.). It is arguable that the ethic of care and community take a level of sophistication that the ethic of justice, which is espoused predominately throughout our society, does not demand. However, it is still important to acknowledge the difference between utilizing multiple ethical paradigms (Proactive Challengers) and relying only on one (Aware Reproducers and Unaware Reproducers).

The Aware Reproducer principals also varied from the Proactive Challenger principals in that they did not describe consistent positive relationships with all stakeholders highlighted in this study. Specifically, all three Aware Reproducer principals felt they had positive relationships with both the students and parents. However, all three expressed a degree of difficulty establishing positive relationships with teachers (see Figure 4.4). Although all three Aware Reproducer principals cited this as an area of focus for them, they all also attributed the relational difficulty with teachers to outside influences rather than taking personal responsibility. This is to say, two of the three principals in the Aware Reproducer category blamed the union with the difficulties they experienced with teachers (Ms. Eleanor and Dr. Abraham) and one referred to a change in leadership style (Ms. Iris). For example, Dr. Abraham described the union as, “very powerful in this district and more times than not teachers will challenge me just to make sure that they are keeping me in check” and Ms. Eleanor cited the rigid overuse of the union’s grievance as her main difficulty with teachers. Ms. Iris cited the lack of leadership and expectations from the previous administration as why teachers in her building have difficulty with her style of leadership and ultimately in forming positive relationships with her.

Although it is reasonable to assume outside influences will impact relationships, for the purposes of this study it is more important to highlight the shared internal characteristics among the principals rather than focusing on numerous outside reasons. However, a consistent pattern that emerged from the analysis of the difficulty Aware Reproducer principals reported having with teachers was the inability of any of the three principals to cite examples of actions they have taken to proactively bridge the difficult relationship.

Another prominent pattern that emerged in the data analysis of the three Aware Reproducer principals was the poor articulation these principals have with the administrators of the high school their students attended as well as a lack of knowledge as to the level of success their students achieved once in and beyond high school. The researcher believes that knowledge and interest in vertical articulation and student tracking can be seen as a behavioral quantification of interest in social mobility. In analyzing the data of the Aware Reproducer principals, there was consistency in a weakly expressed intrinsic motivation in and responsibility for long term student success. With this lack of intrinsic motivation among the Aware Reproducer principals to assume a degree of longitudinal responsibility and ownership in students success, it is much more likely that a principal will not push beyond their job description to actualize the relationships and policy that should be in place to facilitate upward social mobility for their students.

An example of this unexpressed intrinsic motivation for relationship building can be clearly seen in the explanation of the degree of vertical articulation reported by the Aware Reproducers as compared to the Proactive Challengers. Whereas the Proactive

Challenger principals took initiative in establishing positive relationships with all stakeholders, including the administrators of the high school their students attended, even to the point of choosing the job partly based on this variable, the Aware Reproducer principals consistently projected the responsibility for weak vertical articulation on the mechanistic quality of the system they work within. Although systemic restraints are a very understandable reason for a slow developing relationship with stakeholders, these institutional limitations were not only cited by the Aware Reproducer principals as a reason for the relationships not to be previously established, but almost as an excuse to not take personal responsibility in trying to establish these relationships in the future.

For example, when asked about articulation with high school principals, Dr. Abraham reported he was “too busy putting out fires in my building on a daily basis” to focus on establishing relationships outside of the building and that “it really isn’t a big focus for our district” when asked to describe vertical articulation activities he engaged in. Ms. Eleanor echoed this lack of investment in vertical articulation and tracking of students when she noted that she wouldn’t even be able to visually recognize the assistant principals of the high school her students attend since she has such little contact with them. In reference to student tracking, Ms. Eleanor reported, “It’s really someone in central office who would be able to track that information, not a building level person.” Finally, Ms. Iris succinctly communicated the disconnect shared by all three of the Aware Reproducer principals in their understanding of relationship building as being an integral part of their ability to provide opportunities for their students as compared to their more myopic focus on only the daily functioning of the school building. When asked about

vertical articulation, Ms. Iris responded by saying she was too focused on “cleaning up the mess here (in her building)” before she felt she could take anything more on.

This perspective is a stark contrast to the integrated approach of the Proactive Challenger principals, who the data shows would have considered relationship building as a foundational component of “cleaning up a mess” and increasing the opportunities for their students. This contrast between the espoused priority for and the daily practices relating to relationship building is important to note as it further supports the assertion that individual attributes and priorities impact the consistency of relationships more than district expectations or demographics alone. Although this important distinction between predictive variables (personal and professional priorities) versus less predictive variables (district focus and demographics) was previously discussed in the Proactive Challengers section, it is important enough to bear repeating while analyzing the Aware Reproducers’ data.

Specifically, two of the three Aware Reproducer principals came from urban districts (Ms. Eleanor and Dr. Abraham) as compared to one who was based in a suburban district (Ms. Iris). Since an analysis of the data shows the four urban principals to be evenly split between the Aware Reproducer and Unaware Reproducer category and the four suburban principals to be fairly evenly represented in all categories (one Proactive Challenger, one Aware Reproducer, and two Unaware Reproducer), there was no clear pattern in the demographics of a school to establish a clear link between why a principal would fall within the Aware Reproducer category versus the other two categories.

However, it is important to recognize the systematic machine-like power a larger, suburban or urban district can exert in determining the daily job description and effectiveness of a principal. Furthermore, when working in more marginalized, higher need communities, educational leaders must arguably address a more significant level of need than those who work in smaller rural communities. These are important considerations to keep in mind when assessing the engagement level of suburban and urban principals in moral leadership and specifically the facilitation of upward social mobility for their students. However, these considerations are not and should not be considered preventative of moral educational leadership or the challenging of social reproduction. They may and potentially should be examined when assessing a principal's speed in establishing upward social mobility through educational opportunities but certainly not utilized to be dismissive of a principals potential to focus and prioritize establishing opportunity for upward mobility for their students.

Therefore, as explored in the previous section, for the purposes of this study, a principal's personal priorities as well as the daily practices they engaged in were determined to have a stronger relationship to the degree the principal actively worked toward facilitating opportunities for upward social mobility for their students, through access to post secondary education, as compared to the demographics or structure of their school district.

The Unaware Reproducers

There were five principals that fit within the Unaware Reproducer category. These principals are Mr. Garnett, Mr. Rowan, Ms. Rose, Ms. Jackie, and Ms. Coretta. As

was evident in the Aware Reproducer category, there was no apparent pattern in the demographics of the school districts these principals worked within. Of the five Unaware Reproducer principals, one was in a rural school (Mr. Garnett), two were in suburban schools (Mr. Rowan and Ms. Rose) and two were in rural schools (Ms. Jackie and Ms. Coretta). These five principals were placed in the Unaware Reproducer category primarily because they did not describe their job as an educational leader to be associated with facilitating opportunities for upward social mobility for their students (see Figure 4.4); and therefore, did not report engaging in any activities to facilitate such opportunity for their students.

All five of the principals in the Unaware Reproducer category had achieved only a masters level education. Furthermore, all five accessed only one ethical paradigm in their problem solving. Interestingly, four of the five principals relied on the ethic of justice and only one utilized the ethic of community (see Figure 4.4). This is notable because the ethic of justice is the primary ethical paradigm used throughout American society when such ethical matters of right and wrong, fairness, and order are in question. Shapiro & Stefkovich (2005) explain, “Viewing ethical dilemmas from this vantage point (ethic of justice), one may ask questions related to the rule of law and the more abstract concepts of fairness, equity, and justice.” (pp. 13) Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the sole reliance on the ethic of justice, versus other ethical paradigms, may express an underdeveloped understanding of the nuanced field of ethics and an over reliance on prescribed societal ethical norms.

Although these principals espoused a focus on building positive relationships, their descriptions of the strength of the relationships with stakeholders showed clear

inconsistencies. These principals reported difficulty in establishing positive relationships among teachers, students and staff. However, unlike the pattern with the Aware Reproducer principals that highlighted only weakness in teacher relationships, there was no notable pattern concerning which relationships were strong versus which were weak between the Unaware Reproducer principals and the students, teachers, and parents. However, data that did mirror the Aware Reproducer principals was that the Unaware Reproducer principals noted no articulation with high school administrators and did not track the success rates of their students upon graduation. (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4)

Furthermore, the Unaware Reproducer principals echoed the Aware Reproducers tendency to project responsibility for the weakness of relationships with stakeholders on other parties rather than on themselves. For example, when explaining difficulties with parents, Mr. Garnett related anecdotal examples of parents with whom he felt he was justified in having contentious relationships and Ms. Rose noted that parents needed to take their time to get to know her rather than her assuming the responsibility to reach out and establish the relationship. Much like the Aware Reproducer principals, when Ms. Coretta and Ms. Jackie spoke about their difficult relationship with teachers they both blamed the union as well as veteran teachers being resistant to the change they tried to implement.

Overall, a review of the Unaware Reproducer category yielded very few patterns explaining why a principal may not view their job as consisting of an element of facilitating upward social mobility for their students. Out of the twelve principals involved in this study, the Unaware Reproducer category held the highest percentage of participating principals, five out of twelve.

In summary, there were three distinct categories of principals that emerged from the data analyzed in this study. These categories were Proactive Challengers, Aware Reproducers, and Unaware Reproducers . The categories were primarily based on the principal's answers to questions regarding their perspective of and active engagement in providing opportunities for upward social mobility for their students. Once these categories were established, personal and professional characteristics shared by the principals in each category were explored in an effort to determine why a principal would be more likely to fall within a specific category.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Introduction

The data collected through information historical and demographic documents, observations, field notes, and semi structured interviews with elementary school principals working in poor communities has provided answers to the research questions that drove this study. The concluding chapter of this study is comprised of three sections. The section following this introduction is the second section and is entitled “Findings”. In this section, the portraits as well as the data analysis from the previous chapter will be utilized to formulate a response to each of the research questions. Specifically, the categories that were highlighted throughout the data analysis will once again be reviewed. Merriam explains, “In effect, categories are the answers to your research questions.” (Merriam, 1998, p. 183). The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. How do principals define success for their students?
2. How do principals construct their role as facilitating social mobility and/or challenging social reproduction?

What variables, including but not limited to demographic information, education background, and personal ethics, impact how principals view their role in relation to social reproduction.

3. How does the degree of personal and professional alignment with moral leadership affect the principal's perception of their role in challenging social reproduction?

Following the Findings section of this chapter will be the final section entitled "Recommendations". In the Recommendations section I will present suggestions for the field of educational leadership as well as areas for future study based on the findings of this study.

Findings

1. How do principals define success for their students?

Based on the data generated from the semi-structured interviews, all twelve principals included a strong focus on personal and comprehensive development in their definitions of student success. More concretely, the principals noted that students developing on a social and emotional level was equally important to defining success as was achieving academically or on standardized assessments.

Although the holistic development of students was central to every principal's definition of success, some principals highlighted different aspects of development more than others. This is to say, some principals communicated a stronger focus on emotional development versus social development. However, the secondary focuses that were addressed were just that, secondary. They were only mentioned after the primary criteria, which was the comprehensive healthy development of the student.

The principals involved in this study showed much stronger divergence when an operationalized analysis of success was defined, rather than only the theoretical understanding of success discussed above. For the purposes of this study, the definition of success was operationalized as facilitating upward social mobility for their students. Providing this opportunity was operationalized in this research through the degree of investment in and assistance with providing students access to post secondary education. Only seven of the twelve principals involved in this study noted that achieving opportunities for post secondary education was a factor in determining student success levels. The five principals who did not feel that post secondary educational opportunities, which varied from trade school to a two or four year college, were important in their assessment of student success relied solely on the short-term building or district based definition of student success versus a longitudinal definition.

To even further operationalize the data, out of the seven principals who acknowledged the importance of post secondary education, only four were able to concretely cite examples of how this success can be measured and ensured. For example, these four principals recounted in detail the consistent positive results of their investment in relationship building with all stakeholders. They also utilized the strong vertical articulation they had worked towards establishing to help them track student success at the high school level as well as with post secondary pursuits.

2. How do principals construct their role as facilitating social mobility and/or challenging social reproduction?

What variables, including but not limited to demographic information, education background, and personal ethics, impact how principals view their role in relation to social reproduction?

The diverse data gathered from a collection of historical and demographic documents, observations, field notes, and semi-structured interviews highlighted numerous patterns among the twelve principals interviewed. In determining the construct the principals utilized to define their role in facilitating upward social mobility, it is first necessary to review the categories in which the twelve principals fell. The three discreet groupings of principals that emerged from the data analysis were: Unaware Reproducer, Aware Reproducer, and Proactive Challenger.

The Unaware Reproducer category of principals neither viewed their role as connected to facilitating upward social mobility through facilitating post secondary opportunities nor were they able to cite any concrete examples of how they would go about working towards providing this opportunity. Through the data analysis, it was determined that numerous variables contributed to a principal holding the perspective that their job as an educational leader did not include facilitating opportunities for their students in the form of post secondary education.

The data analysis determined that the characteristics of principals who fell within the Unaware Reproducer category included: a limited level of education, an underdeveloped understanding or application of nuanced multiple ethical paradigms, lack of integration in practice, and weak and inconsistent relationships with stakeholders such

as students, teachers, parents, and the administrators of the high school their students attend as well as possible systematic limitations and restraints. In relation to the weak high school articulation reported by the Unaware Reproducer principals, these principals were also unable to report on student success rates at the high school level or the percentage of students who pursued numerous forms of post secondary education (trade, two-year, and four-year schools) after graduation.

The majority of principals who participated in this study fell within this category. It is arguably reasonable to project that the Unaware Reproducer category, which was solely created for the purposes of this study, would also likely hold the majority of educational leaders if the subject pool was expanded to include all American public school principals. This pattern is projected due to the research clearly highlighting the continuance and growing force of social reproduction in American society and the close link it has to the public school system. When considering the vast number of principals that would most likely fall into this category if involved in this study, it becomes clear that there are more institutional and societal factors that are shared among Unaware Reproducer principals as compared to the high level of personal and professional predictive variables shared among the principals in the Proactive Challenger category.

The second of the three categories the principals involved in this study fit within was labeled Aware Reproducer. Three out of the twelve principals interviewed fell within this grouping. The three principals who fell within the Aware Reproducer category reported viewing their role as facilitators of upward mobility but were unable to cite examples of how they actively worked towards generating this opportunity.

The data identified numerous variables that contributed to the dissonance between the Aware Reproducer principals reported investment in providing opportunity and their inability to describe how they provide this opportunity. To begin, these principals had completed only a masters level education with the exception of one of the principals, who had, ten years ago, completed his doctorate.

Furthermore, the Aware Reproducer principals had a limited understanding of the multiple ethical paradigms. Although their primary ethical frameworks were a bit more nuanced than the Unaware Reproducer principals, the Aware Reproducer principals relied solely on only one ethical paradigm when resolving numerous morally complex scenarios. The Aware Reproducer principals also exhibited a pattern of difficulty establishing consistently positive relationships with stakeholders. The pattern of relationship building in the Aware Reproducer category highlighted consistent difficulty with teacher relationships, which was shared by all Aware Reproducer principals. The Aware Reproducer principals also consistently exhibited an inability to establish vertical articulation with the administrators of the high school their students attend. As was seen with the Unaware Reproducer principals, a weak relationship with the administrators of the high school also mirrored an inability to track student success both at the high school level as well as with post secondary pursuits.

The final category that was gleaned from the data analysis was the Proactive Challenger category. Four of the twelve principals interviewed fell within this category. As with the Unaware Reproducer and Aware Reproducer categories, the data that primarily determined the placement of principals into the Proactive Challenger category was their reported investment in facilitating opportunities for upward social mobility for

their students as well as applying this espoused focus to their daily practices. The principals that fell within the Proactive Challenger category both reported an investment in challenging social reproduction, through facilitating access to post secondary education, as well as cited concrete examples of how they prioritize this investment in their daily practice.

Although demographic location, namely a rural community, arose as a variable that applied to three of the four principals, further analysis of the data shifted the focus from demographic location being a predictive variable to intrinsic motivation and the priority of relationship building playing a larger predictive role. This is to say, during the semi-structured interview, all the rural principals reported they pursued their current position due in part to a threshold question of the relationship building opportunity. In considering this, it becomes apparent that the Proactive Challenger principals intrinsically established their priority of actively engaging in challenging social reproduction rather than the demographics of the community demanding their view point.

Beyond an intrinsic drive to challenge social reproduction and a strong focus on relationship building, level of education attained, specifically a doctorate degree, as well as a sophisticated understanding and application of the multiple ethical paradigms were variables shared consistently among the Proactive Challenger principals. As was explored above, these principals also reported positive relationships with all stakeholders, which for the purposes of this study included students, teachers, parents, and high school administrators. Beyond reporting strong vertical articulation, the Proactive Challenger principals were also able to cite specific success rates of their students in high school as well as in their pursuit of post secondary education.

3. How does the degree of personal and professional alignment with moral leadership affect the principal's perception of their role in challenging social reproduction?

To succinctly explain the connection between moral leadership and the degree to which a principal views their role as a challenger to social reproduction, it is necessary to broadly review the description of moral leadership presented in the literature review. As Greenfield noted, "Moral leadership in schools seeks to bring members of that community together around common purpose in a manner that entails being deliberately moral in one's conduct toward and with others and oneself, and in the service or purpose and activities that seek to meet the best needs of all children and adults." (Greenfield, 2004, pp. 179) In relation to principals working in poor communities, it is easily argued that activities that would "seek to meet the best needs of all children and adults" must include providing opportunities for upward social mobility.

Furthermore, to operationalize the understanding of moral educational leadership, differentiating morality and moral leadership is essential. This is to say, framing a principal's practice as engaging in moral leadership versus not engaging in moral leadership is not akin to labeling a leader moral or immoral. As Willower (1994) explained there is morality in all decisions and that education administration is in and of itself an ethical undertaking. Instead, in framing an understanding of the practice of moral leadership one must first recognize the importance of applying to priority of the "best needs of the children and adults" in their daily work. Moreover, this prioritization of the needs of the children and community must be met through relationship building and reciprocity of power. Burns (1978) summarizes this understanding of moral leadership,

“By this term I mean, first, that leaders and led have a relationship not only of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values” (p. 4).

In understanding moral leadership through the framework presented in this study, the strong correlation between a principal’s perceived role in facilitating upward social mobility and their degree of personal and professional alignment with moral leadership becomes apparent. Furthermore, the data patterns that emerged through this study highlighted a relationship between moral educational leadership and challenging social reproduction in poor communities. This can be seen most clearly in the analysis of the principals’ theoretical and applied understanding and prioritization of facilitating upward social mobility opportunities for their students through post secondary education opportunities, as well as in the degree to which principals engaged in positive relationship building. Although this study was able to establish potential relationships between moral educational leadership and a principal’s active interest in providing social mobility, it is vital to acknowledge that, as previously mentioned in the literature review, this is only a preliminary study. As a preliminary study, the findings, especially in relation to the connection between moral leadership and challenging social reproduction, can only provide a small contribution to the understanding of the relationship between these concepts. It is clear that more extensive research is needed to explore the nexus between moral leadership and an educational leader’s interest in providing social mobility.

In regards to the findings of this study, when the data outlined above are utilized in determining the degree to which an elementary school principal working in a poor community is likely to engage in moral leadership, the principals who emerge as the most prominent moral leaders were the Proactive Challenger principals. The Proactive

Challenger principals are also the principals that emerged when the data was analyzed through the lens of the principals who were most likely to provide opportunities for upward social mobility for their students. Therefore, in response to the third research question, the findings of this study have determined there is a correlation between a principal's personal and professional alignment with moral leadership and the degree to which an elementary school principal working in a poor community views their role as a challenger to social reproduction.

Recommendations

The benefits of this study have the potential to impact educational leaders, students, parents, and American society at large. In considering the ever increasing bifurcation of American society and the significant detrimental effect this has on both individuals and the nation, the examination of how education can contribute to increasing upward social mobility becomes deeply important. With this in mind, this research sought to determine what variables were likely to increase the degree to which elementary school principals working in poor communities associated their role with facilitating upward social opportunities for their students.

The data generated from this research highlighted some variables that may be associated with an increased likelihood of an elementary school principal working in a poor community engaging in challenging social reproduction as well as practicing within the framework of moral educational leadership. These variables were an understanding of the role of post secondary education in providing opportunity for upward mobility, the level of education attained by the principal (doctorate), a sophisticated understanding of

the multiple ethical paradigms, a consistent investment in positive relationship building with all stakeholders, as well as investing in ways to track student success in high school and post secondary pursuits.

A review of the variables that may have led to the increased likelihood for both moral leadership and the challenging of social reproduction generates meaningful recommendations for the field of educational leadership. To begin, there is a suggested association between a principal's education level and their propensity to challenge social reproduction and engage in moral leadership. Due to this possible association, it is recommended that a district encourage educational leaders to pursue their doctorate through hiring practices, significant pay scale increases, the opportunity to have course work completely or partially paid for through one's district, as well as the value of a doctorate being explicitly explained by central office administration.

Furthermore, those in the professoriate who work with students obtaining their masters in educational administration may impact an educational leader's probability of pursuing their doctorate through encouragement and exposure to the benefits of a doctorate degree. Moreover, those in higher education may also be able to impact the degree to which educational leaders engage in moral leadership and challenge social reproduction through a careful analysis of the course work their program demands.

The importance of understanding the multiple ethical paradigms was highlighted throughout the findings of this study. Therefore, it is recommended that university level educational leadership programs increase the focus of ethics in their required course work. This can be done through creating a course that explicitly teaches ethics, both as a

field and applied to educational leadership. An increased focus on ethics may also be accomplished through embedding ethical literacy into pre-existing classes.

Further recommendations for the field of educational leadership in regards to the findings of this study center on the importance of consistent relationship building with all stakeholders, namely students, teachers, parents and high school administrators. Relationship building should be an area of importance that is highlighted by the districts vision and mission statement. This professed importance must also be carried out in the daily practices of educational leaders in school districts. To ensure that this is done, it is recommended that public school central office administrators highlight the importance of consistent relationship building in the hiring and evaluative practices of educational administrators. Furthermore, opportunities for vertical articulation among elementary, middle, and high school administrators should not only be granted by central administration but demanded necessary as a best practice.

In conclusion, the benefits of this study can reach beyond impacting the daily practices of educational leaders and also contribute to the existing research on the subject of moral leadership and the need for educational leaders to challenge social reproduction. The findings of this research support the importance of moral leadership highlighted by Greenfield (2004), Fullan (2003), and Sergiovanni (1998) when they suggested that the framework of moral leadership moves the principal's potential to improve student success, especially for marginalized students, from a possibility to a moral imperative.

A suggested area for future research that is based on the findings of this study include an expanded study of educational leaders and their working understanding of moral leadership and the need to associate education with social mobility. The field of

educational leadership would also benefit from further analysis of variables that impact a central administrator's as well as a district's understanding of social reproduction as well as the variables that affected this level of understanding. Finally, studies examining university level educational leadership preparation programs and how they include, or ignore, critical theory and the framework of moral leadership would be beneficial to the field of educational leadership at large.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: An Examination of How Principals Working in Poor Communities View Their Role as Challengers to the Propensity of Social Reproduction in Their Communities

Principal Investigator's Name: Dr. Joan Shapiro
Student Investigator's Name: Dawn Monacella
Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Phone: 215-204-6645

Subject: _____ Date _____
Log #: _____

I am currently engaged in a study of elementary school administrators who work in schools that receive Title One funding. The purpose of this study is to determine how principals define success for their students and how they view their role in generating this success.

To help me gain further insight into this topic, I will ask you to respond to questions and hypothetical dilemmas in a semi-structured interview format. The questions will be focused on goals that you have for your students as well as professional practices you engage in to ensure success for their students.

The interviews will be scheduled in the administrators building, unless the principal requests for them to occur elsewhere. The interview, on average, will last for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews are scheduled to take place between June through August of 2008.

The data you provide will be audio taped and kept anonymously and your participation and anything you say during the interview will be held in the strictest confidence. The data will be stored in a secure cabinet until the completion of the study and then destroyed. All identities will be disguised in the final report.

PP. 1

Initial

Date

Project Title: An Examination of How Principals Working in Poor Communities View Their Role As Challengers to the Propensity of Social Reproduction in Their Communities

I welcome questions about this study at any time. Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis, and you can refuse to participate at any time without consequence or penalty.

Questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Richard Throm, Director of Office for Human Rights Protection, Institutional Review Board, 3rd Floor Hudson Building (555-00), 3425 North Carlisle Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19140, (215) 707-8757.

If you want more information about the interview, or if you have any question or concerns at anytime, you can contact:

Student Investigator: Dawn Monacella
Phone: (617) 519-6470 (24 hour number)
Email: Dawnm@temple.edu

This study has been explained to me, I have read the Consent Form and I agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

By signing this consent form I have not waived any legal right that I otherwise would have as a subject.

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO AUDIO TAPE

Project Title: An Examination of How Principals Working in Poor Communities View Their Role As Challengers to the Propensity of Social Reproduction in Their Communities

Principal Investigator's Name: Dr. Joan Shapiro
Student Investigator's Name: Dawn Monacella
Department: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Phone: 215-204-6645

Subject: _____ Date _____
Log #: _____

This audiotape will be used only for the purpose of RESEARCH. This audiotape will be used as part of a research project at Temple University. Written consent regarding your participation in this research project has already been given. At no time will your name or other's names, your school, or your school district be used.

You agree to be audiotaped at some time between June 2008 and August 2008. You give permission for these tapes to be used from June 2008 thru December 2009. You understand that you can withdraw your permission at any time. Upon your request, the audiotape(s) will no longer be used. This withdrawal will not affect your career or relationship with Dawn Monacella or Temple University in any way.

The audiotape(s) will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the student investigators residence during the research and will be destroyed within three years of completion of this research.

You understand that you will not be paid for being audiotaped or for the use of the audiotape(s).

PP. 1

Initial

Date

Project Title: An Examination of How Principals Working in Poor Communities View Their Role As Challengers to the Propensity of Social Reproduction in Their Communities

Questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Richard Throm, Director of Office for Human Rights Protection, Institutional Review Board, 3rd Floor Hudson Building (555-00), 3425 North Carlisle Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19140, (215) 707-8757.

If you want more information about the audiotape(s), or if I have any questions or concerns at any time, I can contact:

Student Investigator's name: Dawn Monacella
Phone: (617) 519-6470 (24 hour number)
Email: Dawnm@temple.edu

This study has been explained to me, I have read the Consent to Audiotape Form and I agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

By signing this consent form I have not waived any legal right that I otherwise would have as a subject.

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

AN EXAMINATION OF HOW PRINCIPALS WORKING IN POOR COMMUNITIES VIEW THEIR ROLE AS A CHALLENGER FOR THE PROPENSITY OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Principal Interview Protocol

Interview Profile:

Mentor ID: _____

Building ID: _____

1) Now that I have told you a little bit about my study do you have any questions before we begin? My goal is to understand your experiences and focus. Often, the best way for me to do this is to start by asking you to tell me what's important about you and your life. As we go along, if it is alright with you, I will ask you to tell me more about some points and occasionally refer to my list of questions to make sure we don't miss anything. Please start by telling me about your history, your professional development, and why you have chosen to pursue a career as a principal.

2) The following questions will guide the focus of the principal's background:

- a) Race/ Ethnicity
- b) Children- if so how many
- c) Family composite growing up
- d) Family SES
- e) Social mobility in SES- what he/she contributes it to
- f) Parents education level
- g) Degree education prioritized in family
- h) Level of education attained; any further educational ambitions

The following questions will guide the focus on the principal's experiences:

- a) Education: past, present, future
- b) Career ambitions: past, present future
- c) When and how did you begin this current position
- d) Why did you decide to become a principal
- e) Years experience as a principal
- f) Demographic of school?
- g) Demographics of community?
 1. How would you describe your relationship with the following groups:
 - a) Students

- b) Teachers
- c) Parents
- d) Community

The following will guide questions about the principals' job perception and satisfaction:

- a) How would you describe your current position
 - b) What has been most rewarding for you as a principal
 - c) What has been most challenging/frustrating
 - d) Are you satisfied with your current position
 - e) Define overall responsibility of principals?
 - a. Of those responsibilities, what should principals prioritize?
 - f) How important do you believe a principals job is
 - g) How do you define success for yourself?
 - h) How do you define success for your students upon graduation?
- 3) Where do you see the majority of your students in 3 years? College (4 or 2; trade, military, etc.)
- 4) What percent of your students go to college?
 - a) How do you feel about the fact that X% go to college?
- 5) Does your school have any programs that help prepare students for college?
- 6) How much do you believe parents value/prioritize education in this community?
 - a) In assisting students in pursuing college, what role do you think the parents play as opposed to the school?
- 7) What do you see as being the most influential aspects of a student's life, particularly relating to career/education development (i.e. parents, peers, teachers, etc.)
- 8) Do you believe that principals affect/impact a student's ability to gain access to more resources and social status after graduation?
 - a) If so, should facilitating this opportunity be part of a principals job description?
 - b) In what ways can a principal facilitate the opportunity for increased resources after graduation (specific examples)

Before we move onto the second part of this interview, is there anything you would like to add or review out of the questions we just discussed?

DILEMMAS

Dilemma 1

The guidance counselor schedules an appointment with you to discuss a student, with whom there are some concerns. During the meeting, the guidance counselor explains that this student has repeatedly come to school tardy since the beginning of the semester (6 weeks ago). Although this student has always had a note from home, the lateness is starting to affect the students' grades. The counselor noted there have also been some behavioral concerns once this student gets to school and that the student hasn't responded to the few staff members that have attempted to speak with them. Since the student has broken no rules, the counselor asks your for advice on how to proceed. What would your advice be and what would do you think should be the primary focus in resolving this situation?

Dilemma 2

There has been some debate at the last few Board meetings. The community is divided on how to best divide the financial allocations for next years budget. Essentially, there is a faction of the community that wants the school to focus its resources on creating and maintaining a work-study program that will allow students to take classes in the trades and leave school during the school day to gain valuable job experience working in the community. The other faction is pressing for the space, teacher, and monies that the work-study program would take to instead be focused on expanding the college prep classes that are offered in the school. You are one of the principals that is called into the superintendents office to discuss these two possibilities. What would your input be?

Personal Dilemma

Can you tell me about a dilemma you recently faced and how you solved it. Are you happy with your resolution? If no, what would you change? If yes, how did you know you did the right thing?

Is there anything else that you would like to talk about or revisit before we end this interview?